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NAVAL POSTGRADUATE SCHOOL  
Monterey, California



# THESIS

FATHER ABSENCE EFFECTS  
ON  
MILITARY CHILDREN

by

Donald J. Curran, Jr.

March 1981

Thesis Advisor:

P. Butler

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Father Absence Effects On Military Children

by

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Submitted in partial fulfillment of the  
requirements for the degree of

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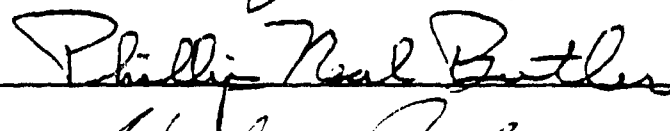
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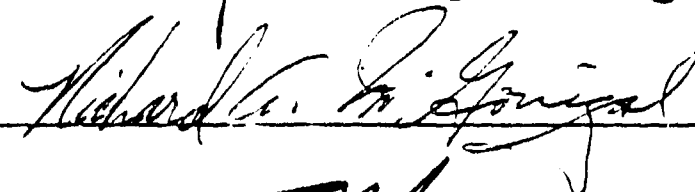
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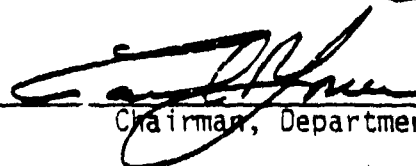
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## ABSTRACT

The effects of father absence on military children were studied by use of a questionnaire and personal interviews. The sample consisted of U.S. military officers and their dependents stationed at the Naval Postgraduate School, Monterey, CA. The study focused on the nature of the absence and how that affected the children's emotional stability and child development. In addition, some coping mechanisms were studied to determine if these aided in coping with separation.

The study concluded that no significant relationship between emotional problems or child development and father absence existed for those in the sample. The coping mechanisms used in the study were found to be of great value in aiding the children and families to deal with separation.

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## I. INTRODUCTION

### A. PURPOSE

The purpose of this study is to investigate two major aspects of family separation in the military. First, the study seeks to determine the effects of father absence on the children of service members. Second, it investigates coping mechanisms used by family members to lessen the negative effects of military separations.

### B. BACKGROUND

In recent years the military services have begun to realize that the stability of the military family plays a large role in the stability and readiness of the armed forces. In a speech at the Naval Postgraduate School in January, 1981, Vice Admiral Lando Zech, Chief of Naval Manpower and Personnel, stated: "In my considered opinion, the military family has an impact on the state of readiness of our armed services and this is not an indirect, but rather a direct influence" [Ref. 1]. These sentiments were shared by the man Admiral Zech relieved, Vice Admiral James Watkins. In September, 1977, while addressing the Military Family Research Conference in San Diego, Ca., Watkins remarked on the lack of formal research of the military family and possible remedial programs [Ref. 2].

In today's all volunteer force, greater numbers of servicemen and women are getting married and raising families. According to the Office of Naval Manpower and Personnel, over 77% of career enlisted personnel are married, as are over 70% of career officer personnel. Traditionally, the family was considered by the services to be excess baggage and not

taken into account when making career decisions for the serviceman.

This view is changing.

As society has changed, so has the way the military establishment views and treats the military family. There are: improved medical care, travel and moving allowances, increased basic allowance for quarters, and day care centers for mothers who work.

While it is true that some improvements have been made, very little research has been done on how military separations affect the family unit. In particular, how does the military family cope with these periods of absence and what effects do they have on the children of the service member?

If the officers of a unit are required to spend inordinate amounts of time handling personal and family problems, then readiness is degraded. If the serviceman is worrying about his family while he is gone and he is not keeping his full attention on work, then readiness is degraded. Although the armed forces have been willing to upgrade the services designed to cater to the family's physical and financial needs, they have done little to identify and deal with the family's emotional needs. This is especially true at times of exceptional stress such as during a prolonged separation.

As research in this area continues, more and more practical methods of coping with the stress that comes from separation are being developed. One recent program adopted by the Navy sends a team of family counselors out to returning deployed units in order to prepare the sailors for homecoming. The reintegration process can be quite stressful so the Navy has adopted this program as one means of making the readjustment to family life as easy as possible.

Military family separations are anything but similar. Each service has different types of extended duty. Lengths of separations and conditions of the separation vary. It would appear that part of the way in which the family copes with the separation is partially a function of the nature of the absence. For example, the degree of perceived danger or risk to the serviceman is different between an unaccompanied tour on Diego Garcia and a similar tour on the border between North and South Korea. This premise is a central theme of this study. Admiral Watkins has stated, "The problem of family separation and role changing which confront, say, the submarine community with patrol cycles of 60 days at sea and 60 days at home are different from those families which may rarely be separated. The dynamics of a one year separation on isolated duty are different from those of a three month training cruise" [Ref. 3]. These factors may have an effect on the way the family views and copes with the separation.

### C. HYPOTHESIS

From the review of the father absence literature, it can be seen that father absence is detrimental to the emotional and psychological development of children. A basic contention of this research project is that in the military service, there are circumstances which define the nature of the absence and make that separation situation unique. Another contention is that a major factor in successful coping by the children is the way parents cope with the situation prior to, during, and after the separation. Coping mechanisms, as used in this study, refer to such things as: discussing the absence with the children prior to the separation, the methods that are used to keep in contact while the husband is gone, the actions the mother takes to keep the father psychologically present in the minds

of the children, and how the children are prepared for the reintegration and reunion period.

Specifically, it is hypothesized that:

(1) There is a positive correlation between the nature of the absence and the emotional instability of the children. Those variables which are used to define the nature of the absence are: predictability, degree of risk, combat or noncombat related and frequency. Those variables used to measure emotional instability are: whether the child has had any emotional problems, as defined by the parents, and whether the child has ever been clinically treated for emotional problems.

(2) There is a negative correlation between the degree of emotional instability of the children (as defined by the parents), and the use of coping mechanisms by the family. The coping mechanisms of the family are measured by the following: discussion of the absence prior to the separation, degree to which the children are aware of the nature of the absence, the extent to which the family communicates verbally and in writing during the absence, and the degree to which the father is kept psychologically present in the home.

(3) There is a positive correlation between the number of absences and permanent change of duty stations and the emotional instability of the children. Emotional instability is measured by those variables delineated in hypothesis one.

(4) There is a positive correlation between the number of absences and permanent change of duty stations and child development (walking, speaking, and toilet training). The contention is, for example, the higher the number of absences, the longer it takes a child to become toilet trained.

## II. REVIEW OF THE LITERATURE

This review will confine itself to the areas of father absence effects on children both in the civilian and military communities, and coping mechanisms used during separation. The specific topics of interest to be covered are: personality and social development, development of masculine/feminine traits, intellectual and academic performance, father absence in the military services, and prolonged separation.

In order to better understand the relationship of the father with respect to the family, many researchers have focused on the effects of paternal deprivation. Families whose fathers are present are compared with father absent families. There are dangers in this approach. It is very difficult to sort out how much of the difference between the father present and father absent families is due to the variable of father absence alone. Factors like socioeconomic status of the family, nature of the absence, reaction by the mother, and age of the child at the onset of the absence must be considered. Unfortunately, this is not usually done. It is often impossible to do because of the research methods employed. Because of this, most father absent research is not conclusive, only highly suggestive.

### A. PERSONALITY DEVELOPMENT AND SOCIAL BEHAVIOR

McCord, McCord and Thurben [Ref. 4], conducted a study involving potential juvenile delinquents from father absent homes. The aggressiveness of the boys was found to be less typically masculine than with boys from father present homes. One interesting finding in this study was that gang



related delinquency more often involved boys from unbroken homes with quarreling parents than boys from father absent homes. This questions the validity of the premise that it is better for the parents to stay together for the children's sake, than to separate. Bacon, Child and Barry [Ref. 5] did a study which supports the contention that "early father absence has a particularly strong association with delinquency among males." They found a negative correlation between juvenile crime and father availability.

In terms of personality disorders, a study by Monahan [Ref. 6] concludes that the loss of the father during childhood was related to an increased risk of suicide. Looking at a sample of 114 successful suicides and 121 constructive attempts, 50% of the former and 63% of the latter had lost a parent during childhood.

In a study of Peace Corps volunteers, 44% of the unsuccessful ones came from father absent homes while only 9% of the successful ones came from father absent homes [Ref. 7] .

Biller concludes that father absence before the age of four or five has a retarding effect on personality development [Ref. 8] . Hamilton disputes this by stating that before the age of four or five, the loss of the mother has a more severe impact on the development of the child. After age five, the absent father has more of an impact [Ref. 9] . In support of Biller's theory, Sontrack [Ref. 10] showed some evidence that boys whose fathers had been absent from birth to the two year old period had adjustment problems. They showed more shame, guilt, inferiority and less trust than boys whose father absence began later.

Hoffman [Ref. 11] studied a group of 497 seventh grade students, of which 25 boys and 28 girls had no male adult in the home during the six months prior to the study. The father absent boys had lower scores on maximum guilt, internal moral judgment, acceptance of blame, moral values, and conformity to rules than father present boys. They also had higher scores on overt aggression.

#### B. DEVELOPMENT OF MASCULINE/FEMININE TRAITS

In this area, evidence suggests that males from father absent homes have a tendency to display more feminine traits than boys from father present homes (Barclay and Cusumono [Ref. 12]. Burton and Whiting [Ref. 13] show some evidence that a boy raised in a father absent, female centered environment in a lower social class neighborhood may privately envy the status of females. This continues until the time he begins to associate with an adolescent male gang. The conflict of sexual identity which follows from the long duration of female envy may be responsible for the denial and rejection of anything even remotely female.

In his review of father absence literature, Hamilton [Ref. 14] cites several studies which tend to show that in doll play, children from father absent homes were more alike than children from normal homes. This suggests that the sex role development in the boys from father absent homes may have been adversely affected in terms of the development of normal aggressive expressiveness. This is supported by Biller [Ref. 15] who found that boys from father absent homes tend to be less secure in their masculinity and less aggressive than boys from father present homes.

Biller [Ref. 16] concludes that mothers of father present boys are slightly more encouraging of masculine behavior than mothers of father

absent boys. The father absent boys' masculinity scores on the game preference measure were significantly correlated with the degree of maternal encouragement of masculine behavior.

The effects of father absence on females has been researched quite thinly. Some studies suggest that overall, females are less affected than boys by father absence. Seward [Ref. 17] and Sutton-Smith [Ref. 18] found evidence that in a father absent home, a girl's feminine development and adaption of a heterosexual role may be impeded. Sex role conflicts have long been associated with father absent situations. A study by Jacobson and Ryder [Ref. 19] stated that father absent girls have difficulty in achieving satisfactory sexual relationships with their husbands, in dealing with aggressive impulses, and in interacting comfortably with men and male peers. Heatherington [Ref. 20] found that when father absence for the female began before the age of five, the girl had more trouble in developing normal heterosexual relationships.

The measurement of such things as masculine and feminine traits is a very difficult and imprecise task. Any measure which is selected is, by its very nature, a product of the researcher's mind, and as such includes a personal bias. The value system and cultural and subcultural biases of the researcher cannot help but be imposed upon the instrument designed to measure these traits. At best, any such measurement is subjective and those which purport to be definitive, are not.

In sum, the literature in this area must be regarded with a good deal of caution. The most one can say is that the literature agrees that father absence can be detrimental to the development of masculine/feminine traits. Although there is no definitive test to prove this, the evidence

does point to a lower degree of aggressiveness in boys from father absent homes than those from father present homes. Beyond this, the literature is inconclusive and it is difficult to generalize the various findings.

#### C. INTELLECTUAL AND ACADEMIC PERFORMANCE

Maxwell [Ref. 21] undertook a study in which 292 eight to thirteen year old neurotic children were compared with British and American children on the Wechsler Intelligence Scale for Children (WISC). He found that absence of the father after age five was significantly related to the lower scores on the comprehension picture completion and coding subtests. In a study [Ref. 22] using the WISC for 138 children who had absent fathers for more than two years, the scores for performance IQ's, block design, and object assembly were lower than those of father present subjects.

Work done by Walford [Ref. 23] suggests that recency of departure was more critical to this area than the total number of years of absence. This contradicts a study done by Deutsch and Brown [Ref. 24] which postulated that there was a cumulative effect by the absence of the father over a long period of time.

Other researchers have concentrated their efforts on how sex differences between child and parent influence the effects of the absence. Many studies have found that, in fact, boys are more negatively effected in the area of intellectual development than girls. There is no consensus concerning the age at which a child is most affected by father absence. Some researchers feel that early departure prior to the age of five is most detrimental, while others feel that the later years from six to fifteen are the most crucial.

In the area of a father's absence and its effect on intellectual development, Radin [Ref. 25] states:

"It appears that father present/father absent is not a dichotomous variable and should not be treated in that fashion. More relevant is the amount of father involvement with the child. Mathematics scores seem to be more sensitive to paternal involvement than verbal scores, particularly for college students and college bound high school students, where separate quantitative and verbal scores are readily obtainable. Other skills related to mathematics also appears to be responsive to father involvement. Although the evidence is not uniform, most data suggests that the father absence is most damaging when the child is less than five years of age. The effect of the damage on cognitive performance, does not, however, become evident until the youngster is at least eight years old. The reason that the father is absent affects the child's intellectual growth, and a recent death appears to be more debilitating than a recent divorce or separation. There is some evidence that in ethnic groups which tend to be patriarchal, father absence has the most debilitating effect."

As with the development of masculine and feminine traits, it is very difficult to assess the impact of father absence on intellectual development. The evidence is contradictory. Some studies state that boys are more negatively affected than girls by father absence in regard to intellectual and academic development. Other studies state the opposite. The same is true of studies concerning whether it is more detrimental for a father to be absent when the child is older or younger than five years of age. Distinctions are also made between father absence effects on quantitative (number ability) and qualitative (verbal, word skills) development. Some research indicates that father absence enhances the male's quantitative ability while his verbal skills are damaged.

It is almost impossible to isolate cause and effect relationships between a dependent and an independent variable in a study. Research which purports to state conclusively that such a relationship exists, i.e., father absence causes a decline in intellectual and academic achievement, should be ignored.

#### D. FATHER ABSENCE AND ADJUSTMENT TO SEPARATION IN THE MILITARY

The literature regarding father absence and adjustment to separation in the military is somewhat limited. Although in recent years more work has been done in this area, still more research is needed. The major studies have concentrated on the following: coping patterns of family members, effects of separation, prolonged absence, use of available family support resources, and how separation effects the role structure within the family.

Research on coping patterns has focused, for the most part, on small groups and has concentrated on the coping patterns used by the family and not the service member. In a study by Decker [Ref. 26] 108 wives whose husbands ranged from E-5 to O-3, were studied. It was found that adjustment to separation by the mother may be the most significant factor in the adjustment of the children. This is supported by Hill [Ref. 27] who concluded that a family's adjustment was in large part a function of the wife's perception of the separation.

In a study by Hamilton, McCubbin, Dahl, and Lester [Ref. 28] families of a deployed fighter squadron were interviewed twice. The first time was just prior to the deployment. The second was just after the deployment began. The findings indicated that predeployment factors are important for understanding the serviceman's perceptions of family stresses while he is at sea. These predeployment factors included: husband's and wife's attitude towards life in the military, their trust or distrust of family programs, the wife's awareness of both informal and formal support programs, and the degree of preparation taken by the family prior to the separation.

Some work has been done in assessing the impact of separations on family support systems, Van Vranken and Benson [Ref. 29], Decker [Ref. 30]. Decker found that family separation severely taxes the abilities and capacities of those remaining to maintain an even emotional balance within the home.

She found that if they begin to experience such emotions as depression, they would use several mechanisms to restore emotional equilibrium. First they would draw on their own inner resources such as religious faith, personal strengths, and rationalizing abilities. Next, if required, they would seek the help and comfort of close friends and family. The last places people would turn for help were the so called formal resources. These included such things as the chaplain corps, Navy Relief Society, family service centers, etc. While these formal resources play an important part in helping the family, Decker felt that having a strong social network of friends and family was the key factor in helping a family cope with separation.

Van Vranken and Benson found, unlike Decker, that although a majority of the wives had some knowledge of the informal military resources, their knowledge of formal services was extremely limited. They also found that those who were most reluctant to use these services were the ones having the most trouble coping with the separation.

Both Gabower [Ref. 31] and Pedersen [Ref. 32] have done extensive work regarding the relationship between father absence and emotional disturbance in military children. Their work is sometimes contradictory. Gabower found a positive correlation between emotional disturbances and the number of separations. Pedersen predicted that the sample of disturbed children

he used would have experienced a greater degree of father absence than group of normal military dependents. Both sample groups were comparable on other background factors. The data did not support Pedersen's prediction. Even when Pederson measured the degree of instability for just those periods when the father was out of the home for six months or longer, he still found no relationship between emotional instability and father absence.

Gabower found that one of the big differences between the normal and disturbed children she studied was the feeling of resentment towards the father due to his absence. Resentment was expressed by some of the children who were behavior cases, but by none of the normal group. Many of those in the normal group expressed a need to have their father home. There was no similar need expressed by those in the disturbed group.

It is impossible to attribute such a phenomenon as emotional disturbance to one factor like father absence. Things such as socioeconomic status, education, culture, etc., all play a part in determining how a person will react to a stressful situation such as family separation.

Rienerth [Ref. 33] studied separation and female centeredness in the military family. Her results tended to support the hypothesis that absence of the husband/father is directly related to female centeredness in the military family. Female centeredness is defined as the degree to which the mother takes on the instrumental family tasks such as managing the finances, taking the children to the ball game, disciplining the children, etc. While doing this she does not give up her expressive tasks such as nurturing the sick, providing emotional support in time of stress, etc. As the number of separations and the total amount of time separated



increases, the likelihood of a woman reporting a high degree of female centeredness also increases. According to Rienenrth's findings, the factor which has the most influence on this phenomenon of female centeredness is the mere fact the husband is gone. It doesn't matter how many times he leaves or how long he is absent. Just the fact that he is absent seems to have the most effect on whether the spouse becomes female centered.

Hillenbrand [Ref. 34] in her study of father absence effects in military families arrived at several interesting findings. For first born males, father absence is positively related to perceived maternal dominance. The first born were more affected because cumulative absence was significantly related to perceived dominance of the mother. She found that father absence which begins early in life, especially prior to the age of five, is related to increased aggressiveness in boys, but not in girls. Cumulative absence was found to be related to aggression in later born boys (any other than first born). Aggressiveness was measured by the Rating Scale for Pupil Adjustment, published by Scientific Research Associates Inc. The child's teacher rated the students on their aggressive behavior towards others. In addition, Hillenbrand found that early separation was significantly related to greater irritability, depression, and impulsiveness in boys, but not in girls. The findings seem to indicate that earlier absence is more pervasive in its effects than total amount of absence.

Hillenbrand concluded that there is a positive correlation between quantitative ability and absence in first born boys, but no relation between these two variables and later born boys. For girls, earlier absence

was associated with decreased quantitative ability. Quantitative ability, as used in this study, refers to skill and aptitude with numbers. It was determined by use of the Kuhlman-Anderson Test, Form EF, Seventh Edition. This test yields quantitative scores which were converted to a quantitative IQ.

Hillenbrand [Ref. 35] found that later born boys were significantly more dependent when the absence of the father had begun at an early age. Significant differences among subjects were also found based on sex and birth order.

The research literature regarding father absence effects on children in the military is inconclusive. For almost every finding, another study which is contradictory can be found. At best, the literature does tell us that the father absence effects are more negative than positive. Children are definitely affected by the absence of the father. No consensus or conclusive evidence has yet been developed which states definitely what those effects may be.

#### E. PROLONGED SEPARATION

The complexity of prolonged separation is compounded by the extreme situation of a husband/father being taken prisoner or declared missing in action. Since Vietnam, a myriad of studies have been undertaken aimed at understanding the POW and his family situation. Hunter [Ref. 36], McCubbin and Dahl [Ref. 37], Boss [Ref. 38], Dahl, McCubbin, Lester [Ref. 39], McCubbin, Hunter, and Metres [Ref. 40] have all studied various aspects of this question.

In a project dealing with family separation in a POW situation, McCubbin and Dahl [Ref. 41] found that the families responded to their new

responsibilities with feelings of frustration and insecurity. The majority of wives reported the lack of the husband's companionship as the most difficult problem with which they had to cope. A rather interesting set of findings dealt with the fact that the longer the father was absent, the better were the children's family relations and the more self-reliant they became. Also, the longer the absence of the father, the better were the children's total personality adjustments and total social adjustment scores as measured by the California Personality Test.

Boss [Ref. 42] found in the case of MIA families that a low degree of psychological presence is related to a high degree of functionality in the MIA wife. A high degree of psychological presence, conversely, tends to be somewhat dysfunctional in the MIA case because it does not allow the family to get on with their lives.

This area of prolonged separation due to being in a POW or MIA status is a gigantic field of study. The research is well underway, but the longitudinal effects of all this on their children will not be known for years.

#### F. CONCLUSION

There is a great deal of literature and research dealing with father absence effects. Much of it is contradictory, but it points to the fact that a father has a definite role to play in the personality development and social growth of his children.

Almost all of the previous research deals with the concept of the absence as a given. There is no real attempt made to distinguish between forced and voluntary separation, or with the nature of the absence itself.

This study makes such an attempt and seeks to measure the impact of an absence based in part on the nature of that absence.

### III. METHOD

#### A. RESEARCH DESIGN

This research project uses standard social science statistical techniques. The methodology employed a survey questionnaire and a personal interview using the questionnaire as a guide

##### 1. Selection of the Sample

The research was conducted at the US Naval Postgraduate School located in Monterey, California. This is a multiservice school where Army, Navy, Air Force, Coast Guard, Marine Corps, civilian, and foreign officer personnel may obtain advanced degrees.

All of the sample group were US military officers and their dependents stationed at either the Naval Postgraduate School or the Fleet Numerical Weather Center in Monterey. Foreign students were not included in the population as this could have entered a cultural bias into the raw data. This could have invalidated any results.

At the time the study was conducted, there were approximately 1200 students enrolled in the school. The population for the study was selected from those students living in the government housing area called La Mesa.

The researcher received permission from the school administration to use the La Mesa housing office records to select the appropriate population for the study.

All La Mesa residents who met the selection criteria of having at least one child two years of age or older were listed on a master sheet.

This master list consisted of 531 families. The remaining 342 units were either unoccupied or the families did not meet the criteria for selection.

Of the 531 families in the sample 68% (362) were US Navy officers and their dependents, 13% (68) were US Army, 8% (41) were US Marine Corps, 6% (32) were US Air Force, 2.5% (13) were US Coast Guard, and 2.5% (15) were civilians.

These figures compare favorably with the actual enrollment for the first quarter of the 1980-81 school year. Actual enrollment was as follows: US Navy 68.7%, US Army 12.1%, US Marine Corps 7.7%, US Air Force 5.3%, US Coast Guard 3.5%, and other 2.5%.

In order to achieve a representative sample by services, lists were drawn up according to service and then a random number was generated using a random number table. That random number was used to determine where the list would be entered. After the list had been entered, an appropriate number of people were chosen from the list to achieve a proper balance.

It was determined that 10% of the population of 531 would be required for a statistically significant sample. This was done by using marginal distribution tables found in Elementary Survey Analysis, by Davis [Ref. 43]. This meant that at least 53 questionnaires had to be returned.

Assuming a fairly high return rate, 140 surveys were sent out initially. After a few days, 65 more surveys were mailed to La Mesa residents using the same selection methods as the first 140 for a total of 205. Ninety of the surveys were returned for a return rate of 43.9%. This number of returned surveys equated to an overall population sample of

16.9%. The return statistics were as follows: US Navy 70% (63), US Army 12.2% (11), US Air Force 7.8% (7), US Marine Corps 5.6% (5). US Coast Guard 3.2% (3), and other 1% (1).

The actual absolute frequencies for each of the above categories are as follows:

Table 1

Comparison of Enrollment, Population, and  
Sample Composition by Branch of Service

	Actual Enrollment		Population		Sample	
	<u>Absolute</u>	<u>%</u>	<u>Absolute</u>	<u>%</u>	<u>Absolute</u>	<u>%</u>
USN	684	68.7	362	68.7	63	70
USA	121	12.1	68	12.8	11	12.2
USMC	77	7.7	41	7.7	5	5.6
USAF	53	5.3	32	6.0	7	7.5
USCG	35	3.5	13	2.4	3	3.2
OTHER	25	2.5	15	2.5	1	1.0

The standard deviations derived from the survey questions, which will be presented later, fell within appropriate ranges. It appears valid to assume that the sample used in the study is representative of the population at large.

## 2. Instruments

Initially, the study was to use one or two well known self esteem and psychological adjustment measures such as the Tennessee Self-Concept Scale and the Pier's Harris Children's Self-Concept Scale. It was determined that the results of such instruments would be suspect for two reasons: the necessity of having the tests administered by the child's parents, and the young age of many children in the study. In light of this, these instruments were not used.

The data were collected through use of a questionnaire which was specifically developed for this study. The survey was mailed to prospective respondents and was returned by 90 families as shown in the table above.

In addition, ten couples were interviewed using the basic questionnaire as a guide. This set of data was tabulated separately from the questionnaire data and the results of the two were compared.

A pre test and post test were not administered. This was due to the short length of time available for research and the nature of the student situation at the Naval Postgraduate School. There are no family separations as a part of assigned duties while stationed at NPS. Respondents were asked to fill out the questionnaire using their past behavior patterns as the guidelines in answering the questions.

## B. SURVEY DESIGN

The questionnaire, (see Appendix A), which was developed by the researcher contained four major categories: (1) General Background Information, (2) Absence and Mobility (this also included information regarding the nature of the absence), (3) Children and Separation and, (4) Child Development.

### 1. General Background Information

This section consisted of nine questions. They dealt with such demographics as branch of service, number of children and their ages, career intent etc. The questions were converted to corresponding variables for the analysis portion of the study.



## 2. Absence and Mobility

This section covered such items as the number of permanent change of station moves the service member had made since he/she had had children. Information was also requested on the number and length of absences experienced by the family since the children had been born.

Also included in this section were five questions specifically designed to help define the exact nature of the absence. This was done in terms of predictability, frequency, risk, and combat relatedness. Each question was presented in a Likert type of format with possible responses ranging from one to seven. Exact meaning of the coding will be discussed in the results portion of this study.

## 3. Children and Separation

This section consisted of ten questions with the first six being processed on a Likert scale format. The values ranged from one to five (one being to a very little extent and five being to a very great extent). The purpose was to explore and gather data on how the family handled the absence prior to, during, and after the separation. Coping mechanisms were thus explored in this section.

The next four questions asked the respondent to discuss his/her perceptions of separations in terms of: who is most affected by the absence, which period of the separation is perceived as the worst, and how the separation affected their children. The last two questions were open ended and not used for statistical analysis.

## 4. Child Development

This final portion of the survey contained 28 questions of which 20 were coded and used as variables for statistical analysis.

Several of the questions dealt with when the child began to talk, walk, and become toilet trained. Problems the family encountered during the separation and methods of coping were explored with a mixture of closed and open-ended queries. Finally, emotional problems, trouble with school authorities, behavior patterns of the child and the question of whether or not the service member would make the service a career again were addressed.

### C. INTERVIEWS

In order to derive data from more than one method, several personal interviews were conducted. One difference between the interview and the mail response was the opportunity for the interviewer to clarify questions and to observe and record respondent's non-verbal behavior when answering the questions. These observations gave the researcher new insights with respect to the study.

#### 1. Selection of the Sample

The interviewees were all personally known to the researcher. They were all in the Naval Service and had experienced several family separations. An attempt was made to pick personnel with older children to gain a wider range of data.

Ten families contacted either by phone or in person, agreed to take part in the study. None of these families had participated in the mail survey portion of the research.

#### 2. Sample Characteristics

As previously stated all families interviewed were in the Naval Service. This was a deliberate choice to focus on the greatest amount of separation time experienced by the interviewees.

The sample contained five surface line officers, two pilots, one communications specialist, and two supply officers. All those interviewed were regular officers and all but one planned to make the service a career. A comparison of this group with the mail survey respondents is presented in Chapter IV.

### 3. Conduct of the Interviews

The interviews were conducted in the homes of the respondents. Children were not present and the interviews ranged in length from one to two hours.

If questions arose as to the meaning or intent of a specific question a clarification was given, otherwise the interviewer attempted to be passive in order to let the respondents answer the questions themselves.

## D. ANALYSIS

### 1. SPSS

The survey analysis was accomplished by using the Statistical Package for the Social Sciences (SPSS). This is an integrated system of programs specifically designed for the analysis of social science data. The Naval Postgraduate School IBM-360 series computer is equipped with SPSS and batch processing. The programs used were frequencies, crosstabs, breakdown, Pearson correlation, and regression. Each program has a list of statistics from which the user may select all or only a portion for use in analyzing the data.

### 2. Frequencies

This subprogram allows the user to compute and display in both tabular and histogram form one way frequencies for discrete variables. For appropriate variables, this study displays the mean, mode, median and standard deviation statistics.

### 3. Crosstabs

"A crosstabulation is a joint frequency distribution of cases according to two or more classificatory variables. The display of the distribution cases by their position on two or more variables is the chief component of contingency table analysis and is the most commonly used analytic method in the social sciences." (Nie, et al.) [Ref. 44]. Variables were broken down and crosstabulated in a row, column, cell format to investigate sets of relationships.

### 4. Breakdown

This subprogram is also used to study the relationships between two or more variables. The sums, means, standard deviations, and variances of a dependent variable are calculated and printed. This variable is "broken down" by selected independent variables and allows the researcher to investigate possible relationships using such techniques as a T-test or analysis of variance. The output of the program can be either tabular or in a tree diagram.

### 5. Pearson Correlation

This subprogram computes what are called Pearson product moment correlations for pairs of variables. The measure used to determine if there is a relationship between two variables is the Pearson correlation coefficient "r". "r" indicates the goodness of fit of a linear regression line to the data. "r" squared tells the user the amount of variation in one variable which is explained by the second variable. It is a very useful tool in determining if there is in fact a significant relationship between variables.

## 6. Regression

This technique allows you to investigate the relationship between a dependent or criterion variable and a group of independent predictor variables. These independent variables are evaluated to see which ones are the best predictors of the criterion variable. For example, the particular program used to derive the predictor equation for emotional problems used the stepwise inclusion function. This feature allows the variables to be entered and ranked according to their predictive properties. If, for instance, number of absences was a better predictor of emotional problems than number of permanent change of duty stations, then the former would be ranked ahead of the latter as a predictor.

## 7. Interview Analysis

The interview data were analyzed using the same SPSS subprograms as the mail survey data. Since the sample was so small, correlative data were not used to draw conclusions or to make any inferences regarding the meaning of the data. The results of the interviews are displayed in Chapter IV.

The qualitative data were analyzed on two levels. First, the information regarding the dynamics of answering the questionnaire itself were recorded and reported. Second, the open-ended data were examined to see if any new insights could be gained. After careful investigation it was determined that no new themes were developed in the interviews that had not already emerged in the mail survey.

The overall analysis strategy was to determine the correlation of such variables as emotional stress to factors that dealt with the nature of the absence and coping mechanisms. Another purpose was to develop

regression equations which would predict when a child would be more likely to suffer emotional problems and when he would be more likely to cope with a separation.

#### E. LIMITATIONS OF THE STUDY

1. Although the nature of the absence was defined by risk, frequency, predictability and combat relatedness, it was not broken down by type or length. These two measures should be investigated to determine if they could add another dimension to the literature.

2. Due to the nature of the study and the sample group, there was no pre-test, post-test, or control group. The study consisted of a snapshot sort of survey which asked the respondents to recall their behavior patterns toward separation. A setting in which the sample was actually experiencing separation during the study would allow for a pre-test, post-test, and control group. These features could possibly yield more reliable data.

3. The children in the study were, for the most part, very young. It could be that some of the children who have experienced separations at an early age may have emotional problems as they get older. These later problems would not be detected by this study. It was also fruitless to use such items as, being involved with civil or school authorities as objective measures of maladjustment patterns. This is because almost all of the children in the study were too young to have been involved with the authorities in a negative way. It would have been helpful if the sample had included a more even distribution of children from toddlers to teenagers.

4. All of the respondents were officers and their families. No enlisted personnel were interviewed or surveyed. The characteristics of the two groups differ sufficiently to indicate that it would be worthwhile to include enlisted personnel and their dependents in future studies.

5. In most cases it was impossible to determine whether the husband or wife had answered the mail survey. No provision was made to identify the respondents by gender. It would have been helpful to know whether the husband or wife had answered, so that possible bias could have been taken into account.

#### IV. RESULTS

This chapter will display the results of the research. The findings of the survey by mail and the data from the personal interviews will be dealt with giving tabular and correlational data. The results will be discussed in terms of overall trends and the questionnaire and interview data will be compared.

Where warranted, comments from respondents are included. The data has been perused to determine common threads or themes which were shared by the respondents. These items will be summarized in this chapter.

The data will be shown section by section, and where appropriate the mean, median, mode and standard deviation will be given. Where a qualitative variable is correlated with a quantitative variable, the statistic Eta was used to determine the validity of the relationship.

In some cases, the tables contain what may seem to be extraneous data. The researcher has included more data than is directly applicable to the findings of the study to give the reader as much information as possible. Because each piece of data is not dealt with in the text does not lessen its potential value.

Throughout this chapter the following definitions are used to describe the variables in the tables:

- |                  |  |
|------------------|--|
| Predictability   | - The degree of predictability associated with separations.                                    |
| Risk             | - The degree of risk to the serviceman during the separation.                                  |
| Prior Discussion | - The extent to which, prior to family separation, the absence is discussed with the children. |
| Combat           | - The degree to which the separations have been combat related duty.                           |



- Child's Awareness - The extent to which the children are generally familiar with the nature of the absence.
- Verbal Communications - The ability of the family to communicate verbally during the absence either by phone or radio.
- Written Communications - The ability of the family to communicate in writing or by tapes during the absence.
- Ability to Cope - The extent to which the children are able to cope with the separation as defined by the parents.
- Psychological Presence - The extent to which the mother attempts to keep the father present in the minds of the children.
- Emotional Problems - Have the children ever been emotionally upset?
- Clinical Treatment - Have the children ever been treated for emotional problems?
- Behavior of Children - General behavior of the children as rated by the parents.
- Verbal and Math Ability - Ability in these areas as rated by the parents.

#### A. GENERAL BACKGROUND INFORMATION

##### 1. What is your branch of service?

Table 2

<u>Category Label</u>	<u>Absolute Frequency</u>	<u>Relative Frequency</u>
USN	63	70.0
USMC	5	5.6
USA	11	12.2
USAF	7	7.5
Other	4	4.9

The relative percentages of respondents in the sample as compared to the entire population at NPS were very close as reflected in Table 1.

The "other" category is made up of US Coast Guard personnel.

##### 2. What is your military occupation?

Table 3

<u>Category Label</u>	<u>Absolute Frequency</u>	<u>Relative Frequency</u>
Surface Line	20	22.2
Pilot	17	18.9
Clerical	4	4.4
Communications	2	2.2

Table 3 (cont'd)

<u>Category Label</u>	<u>Absolute Frequency</u>	<u>Relative Frequency</u>
Surface Nuclear	4	4.4
Naval Flight Officer	8	8.9
Intelligence	4	4.4
Artillery	5	5.6
Supply Corps	7	7.8
Medical Service Corps	4	4.4
Engineering Duty Officer	6	6.7
Civil Eng. Corps	3	3.3
Staff	1	1.1
Explosive Ordnance Disp.	1	1.1

A representative population was achieved via random sampling.

This table is included to give the reader a feel for the varied backgrounds of the respondents.

3. Are you a regular or reserve officer?

Table 4

<u>Category Label</u>	<u>Absolute Frequency</u>	<u>Relative Frequency</u>
Regular Officer	87	96.6
Reserve Officer	3	3.4

As expected, the overwhelming majority of those surveyed were regular officers.

4. When did the service member enter the service?

The most senior respondent entered the military in 1954. The most recent entrant was commissioned in 1976. Fully 50% of those surveyed entered the service prior to January, 1970 and the average time in service was approximately 9.5 years.

5. Do you intend to make the service a career?

Not surprisingly, most of those surveyed at NPS have decided to make the service a career. Officers who find themselves at a military institution of higher learning are thought of as career military by the parent service.

There was no correlation between career intent and emotional problems. With the exception of "degree of combat", none of the measures of the nature of the absence were significant.

6. From what source did you receive your commission?

Table 5

<u>Category Label</u>	<u>Absolute Frequency</u>	<u>Relative Frequency</u>
Service Academy	22	24.4
R.O.T.C.	19	21.1
O.C.S.	23	25.6
Enlisted Program	15	16.7
Other	11	12.2

There was a fairly even distribution among the major commissioning sources. Source of commission did correlate significantly with "prior discussion" and "child's awareness", but the meaning of this relationship is not clear.

7. What is your present rank?

Table 6

<u>Category Label</u>	<u>Absolute Frequency</u>	<u>Relative Frequency</u>
O-2	3	3.3
O-3	46	51.1
O-4	40	44.4
O-5	1	1.1

As would be expected from the average time in the service, the vast majority of students at NPS are senior Lieutenants and junior to middle grade Lieutenant Commanders. The experience level is quite rich and allowed for a great variety of responses.

There was a significant positive correlation between rank and "number of duty stations", but not "number of absences". A positive correlation was also present between rank and "prior discussion" as well as "verbal and math ability".

8. What area of study are you pursuing at NPS?

Table 7

<u>Category Label</u>	<u>Absolute Frequency</u>	<u>Relative Frequency</u>
Ops Research	9	10.0
Command, Control, Communi- cations	3	3.3
Computer Systems	4	4.4
Computer Science	4	4.4
Air Ocean Science	1	1.1
Oceanography	2	2.2
Anti-Sub Warfare	1	1.1
Weapons Systems Engineering	6	6.7
Weapons Systms Science	1	1.1
Underwater Acoustics	1	1.1
Naval Engineering	5	5.6
Engineering Electronics	6	6.7
Aero Engineering	4	4.4
Aero Eng. Avionics	5	5.6
Telecommunications	1	1.1
Nat'l Security (Africa)	4	4.4
Nat'l Security (Far East)	4	4.4
Material Movement	1	1.1
Acquisition Management	1	1.1
Allied Officers	1	1.1
Systems Inventory Mgmt.	1	1.1
Naval Intelligence	2	2.2
Financial Management	10	11.1
Manpower/Pers Analysis	2	2.2
Human Resource Mgmt.	2	2.2

This variable is listed in order to give the reader some sense of the wide ranging pursuits of the respondents. This curriculum information was not used to calculate correlational data.

9. How many children do you have?

Table 8

<u>Category Label</u>	<u>Absolute Frequency</u>	<u>Relative Frequency</u>
1	9	10.0
2	53	58.9
3	23	25.6
4	1	1.1
5	4	4.4

Mean - 2.31

Median - 2.17

Mode - 2

Standard Deviation - .843

This breakdown by number of children reveals that the average number is somewhat above the national average of 2.1. This variable correlated significantly with several variables as shown in the following table.

Table 9

Correlation Between "Number of Children" and Selected Variables.

<u>Variable</u>	<u>r*</u>	<u>p**</u>
Regular/Reserve Officer	.19	.03
Number of Absences	.21	.02
Prior Discussion	.25	.00
Child's Awareness	.23	.01
Age Began Walking	-.21	.02
Age Toilet Trained	-.19	.03
Injuries/Illness	-.27	.00
Operations	-.28	.01
Emotional Problems	-.43	.00
Number of Duty Stations	.11	.14

\* "r" is a mathematical coefficient which is a useful measure of the strength of a relationship between two variables if the variables are linearly related. A value of 1.0 would mean a perfect correlation and a value of 0.0 would mean that there was no correlation.

\*\* "p" denotes the significance level of a relationship. This signifies the probability that the relationship between two variables has occurred by chance. A significance level of 1.0 would mean that the relationship is completely due to chance. A significance level of .01 would mean the probability of the relationship being due to chance is one in one

hundred. Therefore, the lower the "p" value, the more reliable the relationship.

Table 9 reveals several significant relationships between "number of children" and those variables which define child development and coping mechanisms. Also of interest is the strong negative correlation between "emotional problems" and "number of children".

#### 8. ABSENCE/MOBILITY AND THE NATURE OF THE ABSENCE

1. How many permanent change of station moves have you and your family made in the military?

Table 10

<u>Category Label</u>	<u>Absolute Frequency</u>	<u>Relative Frequency</u>
1	2	2.2
2	8	8.9
3	7	7.8
4	12	13.3
5	16	17.8
6	18	20.0
7	12	13.3
8	11	12.2

Mean - 5.19

Median - 5.37

Mode - 6

Standard Deviation - 1.896

The average number of duty stations by branch of service was as follows: USN - 5.3, USA - 5.0, USMC - 6.6, USAF - 4.8.

This was selected as a key variable due to the dynamics involved in uprooting a family and relocating to a new environment. Table 11 lists the correlational results of this with selected variables.

Table 11

Correlation Between "Number of  
Duty Stations" and Selected Variables

<u>Variables</u>	<u>r</u>	<u>p</u>
Predictability	.14	.08
Degree of Risk	.00	.48
Degree of Combat	-.10	.18
Frequency	.09	.19
Prior Discussion	.38	.00
Child's Awareness	.37	.00
Verbal Communications	.10	.16
Written Communications	.31	.00
Ability to Cope	.23	.01
Psychological Presence	.23	.01
Age Began to Walk	.07	.26
Age Began to Speak	.07	.44
Age Toilet Trained	.03	.37
Age Weaned	-.28	.00
Illness/Injury	-.16	.06
Operations	-.14	.10
Emotional Problems	-.17	.05
Clinical Treatment	-.12	.12
Behavior of Children	.30	.00
Verbal Ability	.19	.03
Math Ability	.28	.03
Would Do It Over	.20	.03

As can be seen from the table, the number of duty stations has little impact upon the variables measuring child development such as speaking and walking (with the exception of "age weaned"). There is also no correlation between the number of duty stations and those variables measuring the nature of the absence. There does seem to be a significant relationship between the "number of duty stations", and such positive aspects as, "behavior of the children", and "verbal and math ability".

2. Periods of absence of one month or greater.

Table 12

<u>Category Label</u>	<u>Absolute Frequency</u>	<u>Relative Frequency</u>
1	11	12.3
2	9	10.0
3	17	18.9
4	13	14.4

Table 12 (cont'd)

<u>Category Label</u>	<u>Absolute Frequency</u>	<u>Relative Frequency</u>
5	7	7.8
7	8	8.9
8	2	2.2
10	5	5.6
12	2	2.2
13	1	1.1
15	1	1.1
17	1	1.1
20	1	1.1
31	1	1.1

Mean - 5.05

Median - 3.8

Mode - 3

Standard Deviation - 4.67

The average breakdown of number of absences by service was as follows: USN - 5.7, USA - 2.6, USMC - 2.6, USAF - 4.8.

The variable regarding number of absences was defined purely in terms of separations of one month or greater instead of total separation time. It was felt that the dynamics of coming and going may have more impact upon the family unit than the total amount of time separated. This is supported by the existing literature.

Table 13

Correlation Between "Number of Absences" and Selected Variables

<u>Variables</u>	<u>r</u>	<u>p</u>
Predictability	-.49	.00
Risk	-.10	.17
Degree of Combat	-.02	.39
Frequency	-.46	.00
Prior Discussion	-.02	.42
Child's Awareness	.07	.24
Verbal Communications	-.05	.30



Table 13 (cont'd)

<u>Variables</u>	<u>r</u>	<u>p</u>
Written Communications	-.36	.00
Ability to Cope	.01	.45
Psychological Presence	-.07	.25
Age Began to Walk	.07	.25
Age Began to Speak	.07	.25
Age Toilet Trained	-.03	.38
Illness/Injury	.01	.45
Emotional Problems	-.03	.38
Clinical Treatment	-.08	.22
Number of Children	.21	.02
Operations	-.11	.15

This table reveals that there are very few variables with a significant relationship to "number of absences". None of those measures of child development or adjustment (i.e.: emotional problems, etc.), were significant. Only "predictability", "frequency", "written communications", and "number of children" were significant.

The next four questions were designed to investigate the nature of the absence in terms of predictability, degree of risk, degree of combat, and frequency.

3. To what extent do you feel the absence is predictable or unpredictable? The scale runs from one to seven with one being totally unpredictable and seven being totally predictable.

Table 14

<u>Category Label</u>	<u>Absolute Frequency</u>	<u>Relative Frequency</u>
1 (unpredictable)	3	3.3
2	2	2.2
3	3	3.3
4	6	6.7
5	23	25.6
6	23	25.6
7 (predictable)	29	32.2
Missing	1	1.1

Mean - 5.57

Median - 5.82

Mode - 7

Standard Deviation - 1.48

Most of the respondents felt that the absences they had experienced were for the most part predictable. As this is a key variable, the appropriate correlational data will be displayed in relation to the variable of "emotional problems". The rest of this set of variables which measure the nature of the absence will also be given in the "emotional problems" correlation table.

4. Would you say the absence is generally associated with a high or low degree of risk? On a scale of one to seven, one being a high degree and seven a low degree of risk.

Table 15

<u>Category Label</u>	<u>Absolute Frequency</u>	<u>Relative Frequency</u>
1 (High Risk)	7	7.8
2	8	8.9
3	14	15.6
4	10	11.1
5	12	13.3
6	15	16.7
7 (Low Risk)	23	25.6
Missing	1	1.1

Mean - 4.67

Median - 4.95

Mode - 7

Standard Deviation - 1.987

This variable had a more even spread than predictability. During the personal interviews, the service member at first did not consider his job at sea, as a rule, to be risky. His idea of risk was landing a F-14

on a carrier at night in high seas. After some discussion of the hazards faced by sailors at sea, they, for the most part, changed their perception of how risky their situation was. This is reflected in the interview data which will be covered later. Of interest is that risk had a correlation of  $-.2$  with a significance of  $.02$  with whether or not the service member would do it all over again. Whether this reflected the view of the husband, wife, or both is impossible to say.

5. Would you say the absence is generally combat or non-combat related? Scale is from one to seven, one being combat and seven being non-combat related.

Table 16

<u>Category Label</u>	<u>Absolute Frequency</u>	<u>Relative Frequency</u>
1 (Combat)	5	5.6
2	6	6.7
3	4	4.4
4	13	14.4
5	7	7.8
6	20	22.2
7 (Non-Combat)	34	37.8
Missing	1	1.1

Mean - 4.6

Median - 4.9

Mode - 7

Standard Deviation - 1.98

This variable had a fairly even distribution. During the personal interviews, respondents indicated they felt that some duty such as Indian Ocean deployments was combat related. This was due to the potential for armed conflict even though there were no actual hostilities.

This variable had a correlation of  $-.17$  and a significance of  $.04$  with the question of whether the service member would do it over again.

This would indicate that the more combat related duty seen by the service member, the less likely he would be to make the military a career.

6. Would you say the absences are generally more frequent (More than one major absence per duty station), or infrequent (Only one or no major absences per duty station)? Scale is from one to seven, one being very frequent and seven being very infrequent.

Table 17

<u>Category Label</u>	<u>Absolute Frequency</u>	<u>Relative Frequency</u>
1 (Frequent)	14	15.6
2	17	18.9
3	11	12.2
4	11	12.2
5	3	3.3
6	15	16.7
7 (Infrequent)	18	20.0
Missing	1	1.1

Mean - 4.0

Median - 3.7

Mode - 7

Standard Deviation - 2.2

"Frequency" received the lowest mean score of those variables designed to measure the nature of the absence. There was a high correlation between "frequency" and "predictability" (.39), and "risk" (.39). These were significant to the .001 level. This indicates that as frequency increases so does predictability and degree of risk.

7. If the absences were sea duty oriented, which category did they fall under? (a) submarine, (b) surface ship, (c) embarked air squadron, (d) other.

This variable was not used to derive any correlative data. Future research might well look at this factor.

### C. CHILDREN AND SEPARATION

The variables in this section dealt with the nature of coping mechanisms used by the family prior to, during, and after periods of separation. These data were used to generate correlative statistics and will be displayed in the Pearson Product Moment tables for selected variables later in the chapter. Questions seven through ten were open ended and some of the common themes will be given.

Questions one through six were answered using a Likert type scale with the following designations: (1) To a very little extent, (2) To a little extent, (3) To some extent, (4) To a great extent, (5) To a very great extent.

1. To what extent prior to family separation do you discuss the absence with your children?

Table 18

<u>Category Label</u>	<u>Absolute Frequency</u>	<u>Relative Frequency</u>
1	12	13.6
2	3	3.3
3	24	26.7
4	18	20.0
5	19	21.1
Missing	9	10.0

Mean - 3.1

Median - 3.25

Mode - 3

Standard Deviation - 1.5

Most of those who answered "to a very little extent", stated they did so because the children were extremely young and not able to communicate. Most people seem to have taken a reasonably aggressive approach to "prior discussion" with their children.

Table 19

Correlation Between "Prior Discussion  
and Selected Variables.

<u>Variable</u>	<u>r</u>	<u>p</u>
Source of Commission	.31	.00
Rank	.21	.02
Number of Children	.25	.00
Number of Duty Stations	.38	.00
Number of Absences	-.02	.42
Child's Awareness	.70	.00
Written Communications	.20	.02
Verbal Communications	.14	.08
Ability to Cope	.41	.00
Psychological Presence	.51	.00
Behavior of Children	.29	.00
Verbal Ability	.07	.24
Math Ability	.28	.00
Emotional Problems	-.29	.00

This appears to be a key to coping with separation. Note the higher correlations with "behavior of children", "ability to cope", "child's awareness", and "psychological presence". Also of interest is the negative correlation between "prior discussion", and "emotional problems". It also appears the more duty stations a family experiences, the more they discuss separations.

Source of commission had a high correlation, but this is unexplained. The strong relationship between "rank" and "prior discussion" may indicate that the more senior one becomes, the more separations are discussed.

2. To what extent do any or all of your children know the nature of the absence? (i.e.: do they know it's combat related, sea duty, involves aviation duties etc.)?

Table 20

<u>Category Label</u>	<u>Absolute Frequency</u>	<u>Relative Frequency</u>
1 (Very Little)	13	14.4
2	15	16.7
3	17	18.9
4	16	17.8
5 (Very Great)	20	22.2
Missing	9	10.0

Mean - 3.0

Median - 3.08

Mode - 5

Standard Deviation - 1.56

Table 21

Correlation Between "Child's Awareness" and Selected Variables.

<u>Variable</u>	<u>r</u>	<u>p</u>
Commissioning Source	.34	.00
Number of Children	.23	.01
Number of Duty Stations	.37	.00
Verbal Communications	.11	.09
Written Communications	.21	.00
Ability to Cope	.42	.00
Behavior of Children	.24	.01
Verbal Ability	-.07	.23
Math Ability	.19	.03
Emotional Problems	-.13	.10

Table 21 shows us a highly significant correlation between the "child's awareness", and the "ability to cope", as well as the "behavior of the child". There is a fair correlation between "written communications" and "awareness", and a surprisingly high relationship with "awareness" and "number of duty stations". The high correlation between "awareness" and "commissioning source" is unexplained.

3. To what extent is the family able to communicate verbally during the absence? (phone or radio)

Table 22

<u>Category Label</u>	<u>Absolute Frequency</u>	<u>Relative Frequency</u>
1 (Very Little)	23	25.6
2	24	26.7
3	21	23.3
4	14	15.6
5 (Very Great)	4	4.4
Missing	4	4.4

Mean - 2.38

Median - 2.29

Mode - 2

Standard Deviation - 1.22

In general, respondents felt there was little opportunity to communicate verbally during periods of separation. It correlated to a significant level (.00) with the family's ability to communicate in writing (.43), and the children's ability to cope with the absence (.33).

4. To what extent is your family able to communicate in writing during the absence?

Table 23

<u>Category Label</u>	<u>Absolute Frequency</u>	<u>Relative Frequency</u>
1 (Very Little)	8	8.9
2	4	4.4
3	14	15.
4	30	33.3
5 (Very Great)	30	33.3
Missing	4	4.4

Mean - 3.72

Median - 4.03

Mode - 4

Standard Deviation - 1.34



Respondents felt there was a much higher opportunity to communicate in writing vice verbally. This and the previous question did not address the actual volume of communications, but rather the perceived opportunity to communicate.

Table 24

Correlation Between "Ability to Communicate in Writing" and Selected Variables.

<u>Variable</u>	<u>r</u>	<u>p</u>
Career Intent	-.24	.01
Number of Duty Stations	.34	.00
Number of Absences	-.36	.00
Predictability	.39	.00
Combat Related	-.22	.01
Frequency	.19	.03
Ability to Cope	.31	.00
Psychological Presence	.34	.00
Illness/Injury	.18	.04
Emotional Problems	.15	.07
Behavior of Children	.26	.00

Notice the high correlation between this variable and "number of duty stations". Also of interest is the strong negative correlation between "written communications", and "number of absences". This would seem to indicate that the more often the father is absent, the fewer letters or tapes are exchanged. We see a highly significant correlation between this variable and "ability to cope" as well as "behavior of the children". It can also be seen that "written communications" appears to add to the psychological presence of the father. "Predictability" has a high but unexplained correlation with this variable.

5. In general, to what extent do you feel your children are able to cope with the absence?

Table 25

<u>Category Label</u>	<u>Absolute Frequency</u>	<u>Relative Frequency</u>
1 (Very Little)	2	2.2
2	7	7.8
3	25	27.8
4	31	34.4
5 (Very Great)	15	16.7
Missing	10	11.1

Mean - 3.37

Median - 3.59

Mode - 4

Standard Deviation - 1.32

Table 26

Correlation Between "Ability to  
Cope" and Selected Variables.

<u>Variable</u>	<u>r</u>	<u>p</u>
Number of Duty Stations	.23	.01
Risk	.18	.04
Prior Discussion	.41	.00
Child's Awareness	.42	.00
Verbal Communications	.33	.00
Written Communications	.31	.00
Behavior of Children	.18	.04
Verbal Ability	.24	.01
Psychological Presence	.60	.00
Math Ability	.30	.00
Would Do It Over Again	-.18	.04
Emotional Problems	-.05	.30
Number of Absences	.01	.45

Of interest in this table is the high correlation between "ability to cope", and those variables dealing with coping mechanisms such as: "prior discussion", verbal communications", "child's awareness", and "psychological presence". This tends to indicate that if these kinds of things are done, a child will improve his/her chances of coping with the separation. Note also the correlation between "ability to cope" and

"verbal and math ability". There is also a lack of correlation between "ability to cope", "emotional problems", and "number of absences".

6. When your husband is absent, to what extent do you discuss his activities with your children and try to keep him psychologically present in their minds?

Table 27

<u>Category Label</u>	<u>Absolute Frequency</u>	<u>Relative Frequency</u>
1 (Very Little)	5	5.6
2	2	2.2
3	11	12.2
4	31	34.4
5 (Very Great)	35	38.9
Missing	6	6.7

Mean - 4.00

Median - 4.27

Mode - 5

Standard Deviation - 1.27

Table 28

Correlation Between "Psychological Presence" and Selected Variables.

<u>Variable</u>	<u>r</u>	<u>p</u>
Career Intent	-.19	.03
Number of Duty Stations	.23	.01
Number of Absences	-.07	.25
Prior Discussion	.51	.00
Child's Awareness	.43	.00
Written Communications	.34	.00
Verbal Communications	-.05	.30
Ability to Cope	.60	.00
Age Toilet Trained	.23	.01
Behavior of Children	.30	.00
Emotional Problems	-.04	.34
Verbal Ability	.14	.09
Math Ability	.32	.00

Two items stand out in Table 28. First, note the strong correlation between "psychological presence" and "ability to cope", "child's

awareness", "prior discussion", "written communications", and "math ability". Second, note the lack of a significant relationship between "psychological presence" and the following: "emotional problems", and "number of absences".

7. Do you feel that the absence is harder on the service member, the wife, or the children in terms of emotional and psychological stress?

Table 29

<u>Category Label</u>	<u>Absolute Frequency</u>	<u>Relative Frequency</u>
Wife	66	73.3
Husband	7	7.8
Children	7	7.8
Missing	10	11.1

As can be seen, the vast majority of the respondents felt the separation was most stressful for the wife. Again, there is no way to determine how many of the respondents were actually wives. This remains a weakness of the study. Respondents were asked to explain their answers to this question and the following comments reflect the most common themes expressed.

"The wife...she not only has the loneliness of missing the husband but also has to cope with the myriad of problems that inevitably arise with the children."

"The wife...service member is occupied by job, kids don't notice absence much. The wife doubles as both father and mother plus feels the absence of the husband more intensely due to the nature of their loving relationship."

"As the wife I feel I have the harder time, husband has constant new experiences and close friends. Daughter has her friends and me, but when the kids are asleep it can be very lonely."

"Wife, she has responsibilities 24 hours per day and no one to help share the load of the day to day tasks which need to be completed. Also with the husband, travel is on short notice and of undetermined length. Additional stress placed on wife to always be ready."

"I feel the wife has the hardest adjustment emotionally because she is wholly responsible for the children and has absolutely no relief with them. It's very hard to have only a child to converse with 24 hours a day."

"If the wife is a mature individual who is "squared-away", then she definitely suffers most. If the wife is a non-coper, then the children suffer immeasurably."

"Equal - it's a shared family experience - which has a great ending, being together."

"Children - even though everything is explained repeatedly, they often do not understand."

"Service member because he is away from his most natural environment."

"Service member with respect to missing the children and wondering how they were taking the separation."

"The children - sometimes the father is home, is head of the family, can be played with. Other times when he is gone all they have is their mother. They are confused as to roles of head of the family, principal disciplinarian, etc."

"I don't feel it's harder on anyone in the family but equally difficult for different reasons. Service member obviously misses wife and children, but also comfort of home and recreation of his choice, church, friends, etc. Wife must cope with loneliness, running the house without

support from husband, while at the same time, take over a two parent role while keeping herself in good spirits. (not taking it out on the children) Children, in learning to talk about fears of accepting the fact that their father is gone."

Those who felt the wife was hardest hit by the absence cited the loneliness and added responsibility of being both parents. Although very few felt the service member was hardest hit, the main theme stated was that the service member had no family members for support, while the wife at least had the children. Those who said the children were hardest hit felt that way because the confusion caused by the father's coming and going was detrimental to the child.

8. Do you feel the most difficult part of separations is the period just prior to the serviceman's departure, while he is gone, or the period of readjustment and reintegration just after his return?

Table 30

<u>Category Label</u>	<u>Absolute Frequency</u>	<u>Relative Frequency</u>
Prior to Separation	34	37.8
During Separation	27	30.0
After Separation	18	20.0
Missing	11	12.2

Respondents were asked to explain their responses. Several representative answers of each selection are given.

Period Prior to Separation:

"The period prior to leaving is the most difficult since the leaving is inevitable and hangs over the household. In essence, life cannot proceed 'as normal', since indeed it is not. It's only after departure that the necessary adjustments can be made and that living can go on, and the return becomes a goal."

"This time is busy getting financial matters worked out, uniforms ready, etc. The serviceman is extremely occupied with work. Plus there is a pulling away emotionally between my husband and myself as we establish ourselves in two separate areas."

"The anxiety during this period is so great that the time together is often wasted thinking of the impending separation."

"Due to the nature of work-up where the service member is continually in and out on 1-3 week deployments. This results in a continuous readjustment of total/shared responsibilities by the parents and a lack of certainty by all as a result."

#### During the Separation

"While he is gone, for all practical purposes, the family is a single parent home.

Due to the inability of mother to maintain some quantity and quality of time with children as the parents can do especially when she must assume head of household responsibilities and cope with emotional stress of separation at the same time. Also, the service member is frustrated because he realizes this and yet can do nothing concrete to help while he is away."

#### After the Separation

"All three periods are difficult, but the third stands out in my mind. My husband was overseas for one year - a long time in which to change, grow and develop new patterns of living. For the first several months after his return it was as if neither one of us had room for the other in our lives. If there are additional problems at this time, and there usually are, things can look pretty bleak. Fortunately, we readjusted this time but if

we are faced with another long separation, I don't know whether we will survive it."

"The period of readjustment, in my case, as there was significant growth and development of my son while I was gone, and that required adjustment on my part. At the same time, my wife had to adjust to a different culture and environment."

"I feel the period upon the serviceman's return is the most difficult. Everyone has adjusted to a new lifestyle - that of the absence of a husband and father. The wife has adjusted to the responsibility of making payments, balancing the checkbook, putting gasoline in the car, taking the children to the park, etc. This is all in addition to the usual duties of cooking, cleaning house, doing laundry, etc. The children find it difficult to readjust to the father's discipline which is not always like that of the mother. The service member has difficulty adjusting to the lifestyle which was created during his absence. Then there's the problem of learning how to drive an automobile after being on a cruise for nine months."

For those who felt that the period prior to separation was the most difficult, the following themes emerged: anxiety prior to the departure, preparations required before the husband left, and the busy operational schedule of the husband prior to departure. During the separation the mother felt very alone and without close emotional support. Those who picked the post separation period cited the changes in the family members and the husband over the long absence and the friction caused by his presence after a long separation.

9. What do you feel is the hardest thing about being separated?

"The loss of time in building a relationship never to be recaptured."



"Not being part of your children's development."

"Failure to convince the spouse to accept the fact that separation is a part of the 'job' even though it has occurred infrequently during my career."

"Leaving the children and wife, while deployed receiving news saying someone is sick, especially the wife, because there is no one there to help her."

"Confusion in communication due to the time lag in letters."

"Loneliness and feeling as if your life is on hold."

"The lack of companionship, physical and emotional; the lack of support for children's discipline, lack of support in their lives and endeavors; the lack of someone who 'helps out' in the logistics of raising the family."

"The wife must continue to carry out her responsibilities toward home and the family and also fill the role of the father."

"Lack of companionship with the spouse."

"The hardest thing about being separated is not letting resentment get the better of you. While my husband was skiing in Locaroso, Italy, I was home with three kids who had chicken pox. Or when I'm boarding up windows for a hurricane and get a letter about how great the pubs are in Germany. I also love getting master charge bills from exotic restaurants I'd love to be patronizing. It's hard keeping it together when mail doesn't come for long periods of time."

"Not having another adult around to talk to."

"The constant demands on both of us. The children's continuous needs being met by only one parent is the hardest thing for me. Sometimes I just felt I couldn't give another bath or make one more dinner by myself."

"The inability to know in a reasonable amount of time of a family crisis, due to the distance."

"So many things, large and small cannot be shared by mail adequately, i.e.: a child's first steps etc. Even writing every day just can't fill the gap. It's also very hard for the relationship to continue to grow without the closeness of everyday contact."

"Loneliness."

The major themes of this response were: loneliness, lack of communication, lack of mutual support, burden on the mother of having to assume all responsibility for home and family, and the anxiety that is generated by that added responsibility. Surprisingly, in all the responses boredom was mentioned only once.

10. Overall, how do you feel these separations have effected your children?

"The children have learned that when their father leaves, he will return, and he always loves them. They miss him dearly, they do pose behavioral problems, but nothing very serious."

"No real effect so far, they're too little."

"Separation makes the time together more difficult."

"Not that much because we have tried to keep them on a routine and not make a big deal out of father's absence."

"No idea."

"Our child was too young to have been effected by these separations."

"No lasting effect - forgotten."

"In my case, no effect because the child was very young during the absence. But I see future absences as being more difficult."

"They have become more attached to me (mother), and are used to me being the disciplinarian. They are very independent and are used to doing things with me and hardly ever expect their father to have time for them when he's home."

"My daughter is very curious when I leave to go to school or shopping or anywhere. I have to let her know that I'll return."

"Gives them too strong an image of a mother figure."

"That varies with the child. Number one does not seem to have been negatively effected. Number two seems to have been very much adversely effected. She seems to wonder if she can really count on dad. He was gone so much of her first years that she seems unsure of his basic reliability."

"I feel that separations are extremely difficult on children and that there is no way to recoup the losses of missed special moments and of growth. I have found that children will usually handle separations well if the parents do."

"They are stronger mentally than others who haven't experienced separations."

"Our daughter is not close to her father. I doubt if she ever will be."

"Made them more resilient and less dependent upon adults. Also, can make them resent the returning adult because he/she takes a share of the attention."

"Caused emotional depression in older child with extended periods of crying and moping."

"Disruption of routine has caused oldest to be superindependent, younger two are more insecure than we had expected."

"Children aren't really effected by the father's absence until they are ten years or older."

"So far, we feel as a family that we have handled the separations well because we've taken many steps to minimize and understand the effects. Daddy's picture, a scrapbook of what Daddy was doing, personal letters from Daddy, and phone calls have all helped to keep him real and in contact. The reintegration is geared to the child's needs and maturity."

There seems to be little awareness on the part of the parents regarding the detrimental effects of father absence at an early age. The majority of respondents stated that they believed their children were too young to have been effected by the father's absence. Other themes included: development of a feeling of independence, dependence on the mother, distrust of the father, and attempting to make the best of a bad situation.

#### D. CHILD DEVELOPMENT

##### 1. At what age did your child(ren) begin to walk unassisted?

Table 31

<u>Category Label</u>	<u>Absolute Frequency</u>	<u>Relative Frequency</u>
8	3	3.3
10	15	16.7
11	15	16.7
12	26	28.9
14	5	5.6
15	2	2.2
20	1	1.1
Missing	7	7.8

Mean - 11.51

Median - 11.78

Mode - 12

Standard Deviation - 2.46

Table 32

Correlation Between "Age Began Walking" and Selected Variables.

<u>Variable</u>	<u>r</u>	<u>p</u>
Number of Duty Stations	.07	.26
Number of Absences	.07	.25
Emotional Problems	.03	.36
Clinical Treatment	.44	.00
Age Began to Speak	.21	.02
Age Toilet Trained	.54	.00
Age Weaned	.26	.00

Most babies, according to Dr. Spock [Ref. 45] begin to walk between the ages of 12 and 15 months. This is true of the sample population. Note the high correlation between this and other measures of child development, especially "age toilet trained". Note also the high correlation between "clinical treatment" and walking. There is a noted lack of correlation between this variable and "number of duty stations", "number of absences", and "emotional problems".

2. At what age did your children begin to speak using words?

Table 33

<u>Category Label</u>	<u>Absolute Frequency</u>	<u>Relative Frequency</u>
6	1	1.1
7	3	3.3
8	2	2.2
10	2	2.2
11	5	5.6
12	17	18.9
13	3	3.3
14	4	4.4
15	16	17.8
16	1	1.1
17	1	1.1
18	10	11.1
19	2	2.2
20	3	3.3
21	2	2.2

Table 33 (cont'd)

<u>Category Label</u>	<u>Absolute Frequency</u>	<u>Relative Frequency</u>
22	1	1.1
23	1	1.1
25	5	5.6
55	1	1.1
Missing	10	11.1

Mean - 14.3

Median - 14.37

Mode - 12

Standard Deviation - 7.29

Table 34

Correlation Between "Age Began to  
Speak" and Selected Variables.

<u>Variable</u>	<u>r</u>	<u>p</u>
Number of Duty Stations	-.01	.44
Number of Absences	-.00	.49
Emotional Problems	.01	.43
Clinical Treatment	.13	.10
Age Began to Walk	.21	.02
Age Toilet Trained	.27	.00
Age Weaned	.20	.02

Spock states that a child will begin using words that have meaning between the ages of 1 and 2 years [Ref. 46]. Table 33 bears this out with a tri-modal spread at 12, 15, and 18 months of age. Table 34 shows us there is no correlation between speaking and "number of duty stations", and "number of absences". There is a relationship between speaking and the other measures of child development, but unlike walking, there is no correlation between speaking and "clinical treatment".

3. At what age were your children toilet trained?

Table 35

<u>Category Label</u>	<u>Absolute Frequency</u>	<u>Relative Frequency</u>
8	1	1.1
12	3	3.3
16	1	1.1
17	1	1.1
18	3	3.3
19	1	1.1
20	2	2.2
21	3	3.3
22	3	3.3
23	3	3.3
24	15	16.7
25	3	3.3
26	9	10.0
27	3	3.3
28	7	7.8
30	15	16.7
33	4	4.4
34	1	1.1
36	7	7.8
38	1	1.1
39	1	1.1
Missing	3	3.3

Mean - 25.32

Median - 25.83

Mode - 24 and 30

Standard Deviation - 7.60

Table 36

Correlation Between "Age Child Was  
Toilet Trained" and Selected Variables.

<u>Variable</u>	<u>r</u>	<u>p</u>
Number of Duty Stations	.03	.37
Number of Absences	-.03	.36
Emotional Problems	-.00	.48
Clinical Treatment	.29	.00
Number of Children	-.19	.03
Psychological Presence	.23	.01
Age Began to Walk	.54	.00
Age Began to Speak	.27	.00
Age Weaned	.26	.00

According to Dr. Spock [Ref. 47] a child is normally fully trained between the ages of 2 and 2½ years. This is reflected in the bi-modal nature of Table 35 where the greatest number of children were trained at ages 24 and 30 months. As for Table 36, it shows a high correlation between "toilet trained" and the other child development measures as well as a relationship with "clinical treatment". Notice the lack of a relationship between "toilet training", and "number of duty stations", or "number of absences".

4. At what age did your child wean either from the bottle or the breast?

Table 37

<u>Category Label</u>	<u>Absolute Frequency</u>	<u>Relative Frequency</u>
5	2	2.2
7	2	2.2
8	3	3.3
10	5	5.6
11	7	7.8
12	27	30.0
13	5	5.6
14	2	2.2
15	5	5.6
16	3	3.3
18	10	11.1
19	4	4.4
20	1	1.1
21	2	2.2
23	2	2.2
24	3	3.3
27	1	1.1
28	1	1.1
30	1	1.1
Missing	4	4.4

Mean - 14.04

Median 12.35

Mode - 12

Standard Deviation - 5.37



Table 38

Correlation Between "Age Weaned"  
and Selected Variables

<u>Variable</u>	<u>r</u>	<u>p</u>
Number of Duty Stations	-.28	.00
Number of Absences	.02	.42
Emotional Problems	.04	.34
Clinical Treatment	.25	.00
Age Began to Walk	.26	.00
Age Began to Speak	.20	.02

Quoting Dr. Spock once again [Ref. 48] most babies are weaned between the ages of 12 and 18 months. Table 37 indicates that 79.1% of all respondents' children were weaned by age 18 months. This variable follows the same pattern as the other child development measures with the exception that there is a strong negative correlation between "the number of duty stations", and "weaning".

The following questions were not used in the analysis and will not be tabulated here. The responses were extremely similar and did not provide useful data. The questions were: (5). Were your children fed on demand or on a schedule?, (6). Would you consider your children to be generally affectionate?, (7). Do you encourage affectionate behavior in your children?

The following three questions were open ended and representative responses will be given. These questions were not analyzed due to their qualitative nature. This particular set of questions proved to be ambiguous in that many answered them with different situations in mind. In regard to the question concerning difficult periods in raising a family, "periods" was defined as: ages of children, state of health of family members, periods of father absence and whether or not the wife was pregnant. This ambiguity was evidenced both in the mail surveys and during the personal interviews.

8. In raising your family, what periods are especially difficult for you?

"Holidays, when it strains the budget."

"Our daughter, being only 2½, we haven't had too many difficult times. I guess this age is the most difficult one because of temper tantrums and assertion of the will."

"When I'm under stress, i.e.: Too much to do."

"From 1 to 3 years old."

"Illness of children and absence of father."

"Right before a move and afterwards."

"Getting reacquainted with my children after a long absence."

"Newborn."

"Separations."

"I feel the time right now is very difficult. They're (children ages 12, 9, 7 - all male) getting older and the peer pressure and their own independence is making me feel like I don't have the same control and influence."

"When we are moving to a new location."

"Teenagers and toddlers."

"When father returns after a long deployment."

"Birth to 3 years, 7 years."

"Adjustment to moves - It's hard when the children first move and have no friends yet."

"Our family has been a blessing. Any problems encountered have strengthened our relationship."

"For 6-12 months after a move the children tend to be moody - either aggressive, loud, demanding, then it swings to whiny, quiet."

"When father first comes home from absence."

"None."

"All periods have their own problems."

This question had the least response of any on the survey. This could be due to its ambiguity.

The basic themes dealt with various age groups and the associated problems or with situations such as moving and separations.

9. What kinds of problems do you encounter during these periods?

"Handling small children."

"Temper tantrums, disobedience, rebellion, discipline."

"Anxiety, rebellion, peer pressure and dependency on the part of the children."

"Sleeping and eating by children."

"Dealing with the children's emotional and character make-up, having the wisdom to treat each child as an individual."

"During separations, when dad is away, and the child is disciplined she often cries for dad. When child is sick and dad is away, her desire to be with daddy is increased and it brings out my need for him also."

The concerns garnered from this question centered around raising children and the attendant problems which are sometimes enhanced by the absence of the father. It is interesting to note that not all the worst periods and problems dealt with separations.

10. How do you solve these problems?

This question attempts to determine some of the coping mechanisms and problem solving techniques used by the families in the sample.

"Encouragement, examples of sharing, constant reinforcement of good and bad things."

"Try to be consistent in requiring adherence to family rules and regulations. Try to keep channels of communication and love open - not always easy with a person who refuses to talk to you."

"Organization and determination."

"By discussing the problems as husband and wife and praying about them."

"If the children throw a tantrum, I ignore their bad behavior."

"When daddy is away and my daughter cries for him I usually cry along with her for daddy. Then we hug and it is better for awhile. When my husband is gone I usually turn to friends to ease my fears. I also turn to the Lord."

"During deployments we visit family and friends."

"After a long deployment, the children have become used to a single parent and when father returns it is hard for them to look upon him as a figure of authority. They become confused because they have a routine that does not include two parents. Father eases back in to his role as father over a period of several weeks. It is a gradual thing and the children become better adjusted and less hostile."

"In dealing with absence we allow our faith in God and our relationship with him to play a major part in our decisions and guidance. The Bible, we feel, has most of the answers to day to day problems. We seek a good strong Bible church with good solid teaching."

"My family and close friends have helped my wife and kids while I am away."

The coping mechanisms which were evident in the responses were: prayer, using friends and families for support, and discussing problems as they arose.

The next two questions were not used in the analysis of data and will not be tabulated here.

11. Generally speaking, who disciplines the children? mother, father or both? (85% responded both)

12. Before your children began kindergarten, did you try and teach them such things as the alphabet, drawing, numbers, telling time? (95.6% responded yes)

The following six questions were used as criterion variables against which comparisons were made with the test variables. Correlation tables with selected variables will be given for the first four of these criterion variables.

13. Have your children had any serious illnesses or injuries?

Table 39

<u>Category Label</u>	<u>Absolute Frequency</u>	<u>Relative Frequency</u>
Yes	31	34.4
No	58	64.4
Missing	1	1.1

Table 40

Correlation Between "Serious Illness or Injury" and Selected Variables.

<u>Variable</u>	<u>r</u>	<u>p</u>
Number of Children	-.26	.00
Number of Duty Stations	-.16	.06
Number of Absences	.01	.45
Ability to Cope	.06	.28
Predictability	.09	.19
Risk	.13	.10
Combat	.01	.44
Frequency	-.07	.25
Written Communications	.18	.04
Clinical Treatment	.23	.01
Emotional Problems	.34	.00
Operations	.36	.00

There was a higher percentage of affirmative responses to this question than had been expected by the researcher. Note in Table 39 the negative relationship between "number of children" and "illness/injury". This may indicate the fewer the children in a family, the less the probability of a child sustaining a serious illness or injury. There is also a high correlation between "illness/injury", and "emotional problems", as well as "clinical treatment". The lack of correlation between "illness/injury" and "number of absences", is also interesting.

14. Have any of your children had an operation?

Table 41

<u>Category Label</u>	<u>Absolute Frequency</u>	<u>Relative Frequency</u>
Yes	26	28.9
No	63	70.0
Missing	1	1.1

Table 42

Correlation Between "Operations"  
and Selected Variables.

<u>Variable</u>	<u>r</u>	<u>p</u>
Number of Children	-.23	.01
Number of Duty Stations	-.35	.00
Number of Absences	-.11	.15
Ability to Cope	-.10	.16
Predictability	.11	.14
Risk	.03	.37
Combat	-.11	.14
Frequency	-.00	.47
Written Communications	.07	.25
Emotional Problems	.26	.00
Clinical Treatment	.16	.06
Illness/Injury	.36	.00

This figure follows the same pattern as "illness/injury" with respect to correlational data. "Number of duty stations" had a high negative correlation, while "number of absences" had a non significant

relationship. Correlations between "operations" and measures of the nature of the absence were all non significant. There is, however, a significant relationship between "emotional problems" and "operations".

15. Have your children ever been emotionally upset?

This question was purposely left vague to allow the parents maximum leeway to answer the questions in their own terms. In addition, if the parents feel that the child has had emotional problems, chances are the child will feel or sense that situation and perhaps respond accordingly.

Table 43

<u>Category Label</u>	<u>Absolute Frequency</u>	<u>Relative Frequency</u>
Yes	23	25.6
No	67	74.4

The number of affirmative responses was higher than expected. The relevant correlational data is given in the following table.

Table 44

Correlation Between "Emotional Problems" and Selected Variables.

<u>Variable</u>	<u>r</u>	<u>p</u>
Number of Children	-.23	.01
Number of Duty Stations	-.17	.05
Number of Absences	-.03	.38
Predictability	.15	.06
Risk	.09	.18
Combat	-.02	.42
Frequency	.04	.33
Prior Discussion	-.29	.00
Child's Awareness	-.13	.10
Verbal Communications	-.01	.46
Written Communications	.15	.07
Psychological Presence	-.04	.34
Illness/Injury	.34	.00
Operations	.26	.00
Clinical Treatment	.41	.00

Note in Table 44 the negative correlation between "prior discussion" and "emotional problems". Also note the lack of a relationship between "number of absences" and "emotional problems". As expected, "clinical treatment" and "emotional problems" are highly correlated. There is a very noticeable absence of correlation between "emotional problems" and measures of the nature of the absence. Note also that with the exception of "prior discussion", there is a lack of significant correlation between "emotional problems" and measures of coping mechanisms.

16. Have your children ever been clinically treated for emotional problems?

Table 45

<u>Category Label</u>	<u>Absolute Frequency</u>	<u>Relative Frequency</u>
Yes	5	5.6
No	85	94.4

Table 46

Correlations Between "Clinical Treatment" and Selected Variables.

<u>Variable</u>	<u>r</u>	
Number of Children	-.43	.00
Number of Duty Stations	-.12	.12
Number of Absences	-.03	.38
Predictability	.15	.06
Risk	.09	.18
Combat	-.20	.42
Frequency	.04	.33
Prior Discussion	-.29	.00
Child's Awareness	-.13	.10
Verbal Communications	-.00	.46
Written Communications	.15	.07
Psychological Presence	-.03	.38
Age Began to Speak	.44	.00
Age Began to Walk	.13	.10
Age Toilet Trained	.29	.00

Notice the high correlation between "clinical treatment", and those variables which measure child development. This indicates that if



clinical treatments for emotional problems is experienced, the later the child will begin to walk, talk, and become toilet trained. Also of interest is the negative correlation with "number of children". As with "emotional problems", there is a strong negative correlation between "clinical problems", and "prior discussion".

The next two questions were analyzed but not used to draw any conclusions. This was because the young age of the children usually precluded an affirmative response to the questions.

17. Have any of your children ever been in trouble with the authorities?  
(1.1% responded yes)

18. Have any of your children been in trouble with the school authorities? (3.4% responded yes)

The next four questions use a Likert scale format. The responses are: (1). To a very little extent, (2). To a little extent, (3). To some extent, (4). To a great extent, (5). To a very great extent.

19. To what extent do you feel your children are well behaved?

Table 47

<u>Category Label</u>	<u>Absolute Frequency</u>	<u>Relative Frequency</u>
1 (Very Little)	0	0.0
2	1	1.1
3	13	14.4
4	56	62.2
5 (Very Great)	20	22.2

Mean - 4.05

Median - 4.05

Mode - 4

Standard Deviation - .64

Table 48

Correlation Between "Behavior of  
Children" and Selected Variables.

<u>Variable</u>	<u>r</u>	<u>p</u>
Number of Children	.18	.04
Number of Duty Stations	.11	.14
Number of Absences	-.06	.26
Predictability	.06	.28
Risk	-.12	.11
Combat	-.19	.03
Frequency	.15	.07
Prior Discussion	.29	.00
Child's Awareness	.24	.01
Verbal Communications	.12	.00
Written Communications	.26	.00
Ability to Cope	.18	.04
Psychological Presence	.30	.00
Verbal Ability	.38	.00
Math Ability	.24	.01

Most of the respondents felt their children were well behaved. This was a subjective assessment by the parents and biased accordingly. Behavior is highly related to the variables which measure coping mechanisms. It is quite unrelated to "number of absences", or "number of duty stations". Also note the good correlations between "behavior" and "verbal and math ability".

20. To what extent do you feel your children perform well verbally?

Table 49

<u>Category Label</u>	<u>Absolute Frequency</u>	<u>Relative Frequency</u>
1 (Very Little)	0	0.0
2	2	2.2
3	9	10.0
4	40	44.4
5 (Very Great)	38	42.2
Missing	1	1.1
Mean - 4.28		
Median - 4.33		
Mode - 4		
Standard Deviation - .73		

Table 50

Correlation Between "Verbal  
Ability" and Selected Variables.

<u>Variable</u>	<u>r</u>	<u>p</u>
Number of Duty Stations	.19	.03
Number of Absences	-.00	.49
Predictability	-.03	.38
Risk	-.04	.35
Combat	.07	.25
Frequency	.05	.31
Prior Discussion	.07	.24
Child's Awareness	-.07	.23
Verbal Communications	.01	.45
Written Communication	.00	.47
Psychological Presence	.24	.01
Number of Children	-.05	.29
Behavior of Children	.38	.00
Math Ability	.23	.01

Over 80% of the respondents felt their children's verbal ability rated a 4 or 5. It is interesting that this is significantly correlated only with "psychological presence", "behavior of children", "math ability", and "number of duty stations". Note the lack of a relationship with "number of absences".

21. To what extent do you feel your children perform well mathematically?

Table 51

<u>Category Label</u>	<u>Absolute Frequency</u>	<u>Relative Frequency</u>
1 (Very Little)	1	1.1
2	2	2.2
3	17	18.9
4	33	36.6
5 (Very Great)	29	32.2
Missing	8	8.9

Mean - 3.82

Median - 4.06

Mode - 4

Standard Deviation - 1.17

Table 52

Correlation Between "Math Ability"  
and Selected Variables.

<u>Variable</u>	<u>r</u>	<u>p</u>
Rank	.19	.03
Number of Children	.10	.16
Number of Duty Stations	.28	.00
Number of Absences	-.00	.49
Predictability	.07	.25
Risk	.01	.45
Combat	.03	.38
Frequency	.23	.01
Prior Discussion	.28	.00
Child's Awareness	.19	.03
Verbal Communications	.01	.44
Written Communications	.13	.11
Psychological Presence	.30	.00

Only 64% of the respondents rated their children at the 4 or 5 level in math ability. In addition to being significantly correlated with "psychological presence", there was also a relationship established with the following variables: "prior discussion", "frequency", "child's awareness", "number of duty stations", and "rank".

The next two questions were tabulated but not used in statistical analysis.

22. To what extent you consider your children to be hard on themselves? (i.e.: judges him/herself severely and demands high standards of performance. Easily frustrated). 80% responded "to some extent" or greater.

23. If you had it to do over again, considering the separations, would you make the service a career again?

81.1% of the respondents gave a yes answer to this question. It is not known which spouse answered the question.

The following two tables display the results of multiple regression analysis which was done to determine those variables which could best predict "emotional problems", and "ability to cope".

Table 53

Regression Analysis of  
"Emotional Problems" and Selected Variables.

Multiple R	0.20004			
R Square	0.04001			
Adjusted R Square	-0.00570		F(4,84) p < .10	
Standard Error	0.44150			
Variables In The Equation				
Variable	B	Beta	Std. Error	F
Predictability	0.49551	0.16702	.03455	2.057
Risk	0.31687	0.14304	.02976	1.134
Combat	-0.24016	-0.10231	.02941	.667

Table 53 shows us that those measures of the nature of the absence such as "predictability", "risk", and "combat relatedness", are very poor predictors of a child having emotional problems during father separation.

The multiple R, which gives an indication of the correlation or relationship between the variables, was only .20. Even more telling, the adjusted R square, a figure which eliminates most of the chance element in the equation, was an extremely weak -0.005.

Table 54

Regression Analysis of "Ability to  
Cope" and Selected Variables.

Multiple R	0.67703			
R Square	0.45837			
Adjusted R Square	0.43094		F(4,79) p < .01	
Standard Error	0.99804			

Table 54 (cont'd)  
Variation In The Equation

Variable	B	Beta	Std. Error	F
Psychological Presence	0.53548	0.51427	.10124	27.977
Verbal Comms.	0.26070	0.23623	.09257	7.932
Child's Awareness	0.15913	0.19041	.09893	2.588

Table 54 shows us that "psychological presence", "verbal communications", and "child's awareness" are good, significant predictors of a child's ability to cope with separation.

A multiple R of .677 was achieved and an even more powerful statistic, an adjusted R square of .43 was attained to a significance level of .01.

#### E. INTERVIEW DATA

The interview data were tabulated by using the frequencies, Pearson correlation, and multiple regression programs of SPSS. Significant differences between mail survey data and the interviews will be discussed as well as several insights into the dynamics of responding to the questions during an interview.

##### 1. Comparison of Survey and Interview Data

###### a. Quantitative Data

The survey (mail) sample consisted of 90 respondents while the interview sample contained ten couples. Most of the demographic data such as career intent, regular or reserve status, etc. were fairly consistent. The following table is a comparison between the two groups for several key variables.

Table 55

<u>Category</u>	<u>Mail Survey (Mean)</u>	<u>Interview (Mean)</u>
Number of Absences	5.0	7.6
Number of Duty Stations	5.1	5.1
Predictability	5.5	5.5
Risk	4.6	3.5
Combat	5.3	5.7
Frequency	4.0	2.5
Prior Discussion	3.1	3.2
Child's Awareness	3.0	3.7
Verbal Communications	2.8	2.1
Written Communications	3.7	4.0
Psychological Presence	4.0	4.3
Ability to Cope	3.3	3.5
Behavior of Children	4.0	4.0
Verbal Ability	4.2	4.2
Math Ability	3.8	3.7

The following six categories are compared by percentage of affirmative responses.

<u>Category</u>	<u>Mail Survey</u>	<u>Interview</u>
Illness/Injury	34.4	62.5
Operations	28.8	37.7
Emotional Problems	25.6	37.5
Clinical Treatment	5.6	12.5

The higher percentages for the interview group are attributed to the lower number of respondents in that sample. (12.5% represents one couple from the interview sample.)

b. Qualitative Data

There were no new themes established during the interviews. There were, however, some dynamics which were of interest and added to data base.

During the interview, husbands and wives would often disagree over the answer to a question. The interviewer would thus record both responses. This evidence of disagreement would not usually appear on the mail survey form, although there were instances where each spouse indicated

an individual response. In most cases if there had been a disagreement, the researcher received only the compromise version and did not have the benefit of seeing both points of view.

The questions which most often caused disagreement were:

(1) Who is hardest hit by the absence?, and (2) If you had it to do over again would you make the service a career? It seemed obvious during the interviews that most individuals did not attempt to empathize with their spouse when it came to separations. It was very difficult for each partner to visualize how the other lived while apart and what their life was like.

The question of doing it over again usually caused the greatest amount of soul-searching and disagreement. In all but one case when there was disagreement the husband would do it over again, but the wife would not.

It also became evident that many of the respondents had never really thought about these kinds of questions concerning separation and father absence. The interviews forced people to address the issues of separation, coping techniques, role changes during absence, etc. For some, this was not a comfortable experience.

It became apparent that some of the questions, specifically those relating to difficult periods in raising a family and whether the child had experienced emotional problems, were somewhat ambiguous. After explaining the intent of the questions, the answers were based on a common understanding.

Several of the questions called for consideration of each child, but allowed for only one response. These were questions such as those asking



for a rating of verbal and math ability or the behavior of the children. In all cases where there was more than one child, the parents rated them differently. In the mail survey results, of course, there was only one response. Whether this represented an aggregate response is impossible to say.

Two questions had a wide variation in mean scores between the mail survey and interviews. These were the degree of risk and frequency associated with separations. The mean risk score for the mail survey was 4.6, for those interviewed, 3.5. This indicates that the interviewees felt that the jobs, while deployed, were riskier. During the interview when first asked about risk, all respondents answered with a lower risk rating than was ultimately recorded. The interviewer asked questions concerning their duties while at sea and upon reflection, the respondent agreed his job was far riskier than he had first perceived. Risk and danger are evidently not associated with the everyday occupations of the Naval profession in an operational situation.

Likewise, frequency had a mean score of 4.0 on the mail survey and 2.5 in the interviews. The wives of those interviewed seemed to have a definite feeling that separations were very frequent. They did not hesitate to answer on the low end of the scale and this accounts for the large difference in the mean scores.

Although there is a large difference between samples for "number of absences", the researcher cannot explain the difference.

Those other questions designed to measure the nature of the absence, "combat relatedness", and "predictability" were not treated in the same manner as "risk" and "frequency" by the respondents. They

seemed to have a better conceptual grasp of these ideas and were more positive in their answers.

In general, the interviews seemed to offer a more colorful, richer, and insightful source of data than the mail survey. The interaction between the spouses aided in lending meaning to otherwise drab responses.

Due to the low number of people interviewed the researcher had little confidence in the significance of the Pearson correlations or the regression work and these were not used to draw conclusions.

This concludes the display of results from the survey and interviews. Now we turn to the conclusions section of the study to determine if the data has supported the predictions made in Chapter 1. We will also look at some additional findings which are not related to the original hypotheses.

## V, CONCLUSIONS/RECOMMENDATIONS

This has been a study of the effects of father absence on the children of military officers. These effects were investigated in terms of the nature of the absence, the number of absences, and the number of permanent change of duty stations. In addition, various mechanisms used to cope with separation and father absence were studied to determine if they helped children cope with the separation.

Any conclusions drawn from this study must be tempered with the knowledge that many more factors than were investigated are involved in whether a child copes with his/her father's absence or suffers emotionally from the separation.

The predictions hypothesized in Chapter One will be compared with the results of the study to determine if they were proved or disproved. Also, additional findings will be presented. Finally, directions for future research will be discussed.

### A. HYPOTHESES FINDINGS

Four hypotheses were presented in Chapter One. This section compares the results of the study with each.

#### 1. Prediction

There is a positive correlation between the nature of the absence and the emotional instability of the children.

#### Findings

The data do not support this hypothesis. When "emotional problems" was correlated with those variables designed to measure the nature of the absence, there was no significant correlation for any of them. (See Table 44)

In addition, a multiple regression analysis was performed using "emotional problems" as the dependent variable and those measures designed to test the nature of the absence as the independent variables. (See Table 53). This analysis indicates that those factors which purport to measure the nature of the absence are not reliable predictors of emotional stress in children undergoing separation.

## 2. Prediction

There is a negative correlation between the degree of emotional instability of the children (as defined by the parents), and the use of coping mechanisms by the family.

### Finding

The data supports this hypothesis. (See Table 44). There was a correlation of  $-.29$  between "prior discussion" and "emotional problems" with a significance level of  $.00$ . There was also a correlation of  $-.13$  between "child's awareness" and "emotional problems" with a significance level of  $.10$ .

## 3. Prediction

There is a positive correlation between the number of absences and permanent change of duty stations and the emotional instability of the children.

### Findings

The data do not support the hypothesis. (See Table 44). The correlation between "emotional problems" and "number of duty stations", and "number of absences" was not significant.

The lack of correlation between the "number of absences" and "emotional problems" is surprising. The bulk of the literature implies that there is something intrinsically bad about father absence. The above

finding indicates that there is nothing intrinsically wrong with absence per se. It appears other factors have more to do with the emotional stability or instability of a child than the mere fact that the father is absent.

#### 4. Prediction

There is a positive correlation between the "number of absences" and "permanent change of duty stations", and child development (walking, talking, and toilet training).

#### Findings

The data do not support this hypothesis. The correlational data between these variables are shown in Tables 11 and 12. None of the relationships between absences and duty stations, and the measures of child development were significant.

Of interest is the fact that there was a significant correlation between "age weaned" and "number of duty stations" ( $-.28$  to a significance level of  $.01$ ), but no correlation between "age weaned" and "number of absences" ( $.02$  to a significance level of  $.42$ ).

Although the data did not support three of the four hypotheses, this is not viewed as a failure in any sense of the word. Hypotheses which are disproved have just as much meaning, indeed sometimes more meaning, than the hypothesis which is supported by the research data.

#### B. ADDITIONAL FINDINGS

This section concerns itself with some findings of the study which were not formally declared at the beginning of the research. They surfaced during the process of investigating the data.

## 1. The Importance of Coping Mechanisms

One of the most significant aspects of this research has been the development of statistical support of the contention that the ability of a child to cope with a father absent situation is enhanced by the use of active coping mechanisms.

These measures include: discussion of the separation prior to the absence, increasing the child's awareness of the nature of the absence, maintaining written and verbal communications with the father while he is absent, and maintaining the psychological presence of the father in the minds of the children while he is gone.

Table 26 shows a positive correlation of these measures of coping mechanisms with "ability to cope".

In addition, a multiple regression analysis was conducted using "ability to cope" as the dependent variable and those coping mechanisms listed in Table 54 as the independent, predictor variables. This analysis indicates that these variables are good predictors of a child's ability to cope with separation of the type discussed in this study.

## 2. The Attitude of Parents Regarding the Worst Period of Absence

Although the literature generally regards the reintegration period associated with post separation to be the most stressful on the family, only 20% of the respondents felt this way. Most stated that the period prior to separation was the most difficult.

The literature highlights the problems of role definition, changes in the family social structure, and resentment of the father by the children as the primary causes of problems during the reintegration period. Those respondents who agreed this was the worst period of the absence generally echoed these themes.

It may be implied that military officer's families adjust more easily to reintegration after an absence than the population at large.

3. The Attitude of the Parents Towards the Effects of Father Absence on Young Children

Although some of the literature concludes that father absence prior to the age of five is detrimental to children, the majority of the sample did not feel this way. The overwhelming sentiment among the respondents was that when children are young during the period of father absence, they are too small to be affected. The general feeling was that the child had to be old enough to have a vivid memory of his father's absence to have been effected to any appreciable degree. One respondent went so far as to say that children are not affected by the father's absence until they are ten years old.

There appears to be a lack of awareness by the respondents of the possible negative effects that father absence at an early age could have on a child. There were several who did say that although there were no apparent effects on their children as yet, they felt that they may manifest themselves as the children get older.

4. Factors Affecting the Behavior of the Children

The factors which have an effect on the child's ability to cope with a separation also correlate well with the behavior of the children. In a family where the children are able to cope with the separation (as defined by the parents), you are likely to find better behaved children. In addition, verbal and math ability correlated well with good behavior. (See Table 48).

dependents concerning how to deal with separations. Parents should be made aware of the things they can do prior to, during, and after a separation which will enhance the ability of the family to cope. The education effort should be aimed at the entire family and vigorously pursued by appropriate personnel at the unit level.

Appendix B is a family separation workshop which was developed by the researcher at the Naval Postgraduate School. It has been well received by those who have participated in it. It is hoped that it will be used by other organizations in the service as well.

The workshop consists of several family activities, role play, a lecturette presentation and a group participation section.

The workshop can be adapted to suit the needs of each individual unit and has been designed to be useable with only a brief preparation period.

Separations have been, are, and will continue to be a part of military life. Since military personnel will continue to marry and raise families, a logical way to reduce the stress associated with family separations is to improve coping skills. The better we deal with the hardships or separation, the more we learn about ourselves and our families in regard to how we react under stress. The more we learn, the better we will be able to cope with separation and to reduce the negative effects of father absence on children.



APPENDIX A  
FATHER ABSENCE SURVEY FORM

Dear Military Family,

You have been selected by a random process to participate in a NPS thesis research project. The area of study is the effects of father absence on children in the military. Your participation is purely voluntary and you are under no obligation to take part in the study. I would greatly appreciate it, however, if you would consider giving about 35-40 minutes of your time to provide me with the requested information.

Family separation and father absence are something of occupational hazards in the military and have a significant effect on both the service member and his family. To date, very little research has been done which looks at how the family is affected by these periods of absence and this study is an attempt to fill some of the holes in this area and I can't do it without your help.

The enclosed questionnaire is designed to provide the relevant information concerning the families selected to participate in the study and through the magic of statistical analysis, I will hopefully be able to draw some conclusions about the effects of father absence on children in the military. Even if you have never experienced a separation during your military career, it is still important that you fill out the survey.

I wish to assure you that the information you submit is completely confidential. In fact, please do not put your name on the survey form. This will ensure your anonymity.

Your cooperation in this project means a great deal and I am confident that the results will make your contribution worthwhile. I plan to make recommendations to the policy makers of the various services regarding the results of this study and your input is vital.

Please complete the questionnaire as soon as possible and mail it back to me in the pre-paid envelope in your packet.

Sincerely,

Donald J. Curran, Jr.  
Lcdr., U.S.N.

Father Absence Effects Questionnaire

A. General Background Information

1. What is your branch of service?

- (1) USN \_\_\_\_\_
- (2) USAF \_\_\_\_\_
- (3) USMC \_\_\_\_\_
- (4) USCG \_\_\_\_\_
- (5) Other \_\_\_\_\_ (Specify)

2. What is your military occupation? (i.e.: A-7 pilot, helo pilot, military security, submariner, infantry, etc.)  
\_\_\_\_\_

3. Are you a regular or a reserve officer?

- (1) Regular \_\_\_\_\_
- (2) Reserve \_\_\_\_\_

4. When did the service member enter the military? \_\_\_\_\_  
year/month/day

5. Do you intend to make the service a career? Yes \_\_\_\_\_ No \_\_\_\_\_

6. From what source did you receive your commission?

- (1) Service Academy \_\_\_\_\_
- (2) R.O.T.C. \_\_\_\_\_
- (3) O.C.S. \_\_\_\_\_
- (4) Enlisted Program \_\_\_\_\_ (Please Specify)
- (5) Other \_\_\_\_\_ (Please Specify)

7. What is your present rank?

- (1) O-1 \_\_\_\_\_
- (2) O-2 \_\_\_\_\_
- (3) O-3 \_\_\_\_\_
- (4) O-4 \_\_\_\_\_
- (5) O-5 \_\_\_\_\_
- (6) Other \_\_\_\_\_ (Please Specify)

8. What area of study are you pursuing at NPS? \_\_\_\_\_  
Curric. No.

9. Ages of family members.

<u>Member</u>	<u>Date of Birth</u>	<u>Sex</u>	<u>Place of Birth</u>
Husband		M	
Wife		F	
Child 1			
Child 2			
Child 3			
Child 4			
Child 5			
Child 6			

B. Absence and Mobility

1. Where have you and your family been previously assigned?

<u>From</u> (yr/mo)	<u>To</u> (yr/mo)	<u>City</u>	<u>State</u>	<u>Duty Station</u>	<u>Job Title</u>
_____	_____	_____	_____	_____	_____
_____	_____	_____	_____	_____	_____
_____	_____	_____	_____	_____	_____
_____	_____	_____	_____	_____	_____
_____	_____	_____	_____	_____	_____
_____	_____	_____	_____	_____	_____

2. Periods of Absence (One month or greater) Please try to be as accurate as possible.

<u>Date</u> <u>Departed</u> <u>yr/mo</u>	<u>Date</u> <u>Returned</u> <u>yr/mo</u>	<u>Accompanied</u> <u>Yes or No</u>	<u>Combat Duty</u> <u>Yes or No</u>	<u>Country to</u> <u>Which Assigned</u>
_____	_____	_____	_____	_____
_____	_____	_____	_____	_____
_____	_____	_____	_____	_____
_____	_____	_____	_____	_____
_____	_____	_____	_____	_____
_____	_____	_____	_____	_____
_____	_____	_____	_____	_____

Date Departed yr/mo	Returned yr/mo	Accompanied Yes or No	Combat Duty Yes or No	Country to Which Assigned
_____	_____	_____	_____	_____
_____	_____	_____	_____	_____
_____	_____	_____	_____	_____
_____	_____	_____	_____	_____

### 3. Nature of the Absence

For the next four questions please mark the line where you feel it best describes the nature of the general type of absence you have experienced.

- (1) Would you say the absence is generally:

Unpredictable    1   /   2   /   3   /   4   /   5   /   6   /   7   Predictable

- (2) Would you say the absence is generally associated with:

High degree of risk    1   /   2   /   3   /   4   /   5   /   6   /   7   Low degree of risk

- (3) Would you say the absence is generally:

Combat Related    1   /   2   /   3   /   4   /   5   /   6   /   7   Non-Combat Related

- (4) Would you say the absences are generally more frequent (more than one major absence per duty station) or infrequent (Only one or no major separations per duty station)?

Frequent    1   /   2   /   3   /   4   /   5   /   6   /   7   Infrequent

- (5) If the absences are sea duty oriented which category do they fall under:

- (a) Submarine Duty \_\_\_\_\_  
 (b) Surface Ship \_\_\_\_\_  
 (c) Air Squadron Assigned to Ship \_\_\_\_\_  
 (d) Other \_\_\_\_\_ (Please Specify)

- (6) Any other information you wish to give which would describe the nature of the absence.

### C. Children and Separation

For the following questions that have a scale of answers of from one to five, the values below apply:

- (1) To a very little extent
- (2) To a little extent
- (3) To a great extent
- (4) To a great extent

1. To what extent, prior to family assignment, do you discuss the impending absence with your children?

- (1) \_\_\_\_\_
- (2) \_\_\_\_\_
- (3) \_\_\_\_\_
- (4) \_\_\_\_\_
- (5) \_\_\_\_\_

2. To what extent do any or all of your children know the nature of the absence? (i.e.: do they know it's combat duty, sea duty, involving carrier aviation duties, etc.)

- (1) \_\_\_\_\_
- (2) \_\_\_\_\_
- (3) \_\_\_\_\_
- (4) \_\_\_\_\_
- (5) \_\_\_\_\_

3. To what extent is the family able to communicate verbally during the absence? (phone or radio)

- (1) \_\_\_\_\_
- (2) \_\_\_\_\_
- (3) \_\_\_\_\_
- (4) \_\_\_\_\_
- (5) \_\_\_\_\_

4. To what extent is your family able to communicate in writing during the absence?

- (1) \_\_\_\_\_
- (2) \_\_\_\_\_
- (3) \_\_\_\_\_
- (4) \_\_\_\_\_
- (5) \_\_\_\_\_

5. In general, to what extent do you feel your children are able to successfully cope with the absence?

- (1) \_\_\_\_\_
- (2) \_\_\_\_\_
- (3) \_\_\_\_\_
- (4) \_\_\_\_\_
- (5) \_\_\_\_\_

6. Do you feel that the absence is harder in terms of emotional and psychological stress on the service member, wife or children?  
Please explain your answer.
7. When your husband is absent, to what extent do you discuss his activities with your children and try to keep him psychologically present in the home?  
 (1) \_\_\_\_\_  
 (2) \_\_\_\_\_  
 (3) \_\_\_\_\_  
 (4) \_\_\_\_\_  
 (5) \_\_\_\_\_
8. Do you feel that the most difficult part of separations is the period just prior to the service member's departure, while he is gone or the period of readjustment and reintegration just after his return? Please explain your answer.
9. What do you feel is the hardest thing about being separated?
10. Overall, how do you feel these separations have affected your children?

D. Child Development

1. At what age did your children begin to walk unassisted?

Child 1 _____	Child 4 _____
Child 2 _____	Child 5 _____
Child 3 _____	Child 6 _____

2. At what age did your children begin to speak using words?

Child 1 _____	Child 4 _____
Child 2 _____	Child 5 _____
Child 3 _____	Child 6 _____

3. At what age were your children toilet trained?

Child 1 _____	Child 4 _____
Child 2 _____	Child 5 _____
Child 3 _____	Child 6 _____

- 3a. Did you have any particular difficulty with the training process?

- 3b. What did you do if there was an accident?

4. At what age did your children wean themselves from either the bottle or breast?

Child 1 _____	Child 4 _____
Child 2 _____	Child 5 _____
Child 3 _____	Child 6 _____

- 4a. Were they fed on demand or on a schedule? \_\_\_\_\_

5. Would you consider your children to be generally affectionate?

- 5a. Do you encourage affectionate behavior in your children?
6. In raising your family, what periods were especially difficult for you?
- 6a. Kinds of problems?
- 6b. How did you solve them?
7. Generally, who disciplines the children?  
 Father\_\_\_\_\_ Mother\_\_\_\_\_ Both\_\_\_\_\_
8. Before your children began kindergarten, did you try and teach them such things as the alphabet\_\_\_\_\_, drawing\_\_\_\_\_, numbers\_\_\_\_\_, telling time\_\_\_\_\_?
9. Have your children had any serious illnesses or injuries?  
 Yes\_\_\_\_\_ No\_\_\_\_\_
- 9a. Which ones?
- 9b. When did they occur?
- 9c. Have your children had any operations? Yes\_\_\_\_\_, No\_\_\_\_\_
- 9d. When?
- 9e. What were they for?
10. Have your children ever been emotionally upset? Yes\_\_\_\_\_, No\_\_\_\_\_
- 10a. Have they ever been treated for this condition? Yes\_\_\_\_\_, No\_\_\_\_\_
11. Has the child ever been in trouble with the authorities? Please explain.
12. Have any of your children ever been in trouble with the school authorities? Please explain.
13. To what extent do you feel the child is well behaved?
- (1) \_\_\_\_\_  
 (2) \_\_\_\_\_  
 (3) \_\_\_\_\_  
 (4) \_\_\_\_\_  
 (5) \_\_\_\_\_
14. To what extent do you feel your children perform?
- a) Verbally (1)\_\_\_\_\_ (2)\_\_\_\_\_ (3)\_\_\_\_\_ (4)\_\_\_\_\_ (5)\_\_\_\_\_
- b) Mathematically (1)\_\_\_\_\_ (2)\_\_\_\_\_ (3)\_\_\_\_\_ (4)\_\_\_\_\_ (5)\_\_\_\_\_
15. To what extent would you consider the child to be hard on himself?  
 (i.e.: judges himself severely and demands high levels of performance)
- (1)\_\_\_\_\_ (2)\_\_\_\_\_ (3)\_\_\_\_\_ (4)\_\_\_\_\_ (5)\_\_\_\_\_



16. Would you object to a military career for your children? Yes\_\_\_ No\_\_\_
17. Please feel free to contribute any other information which you feel would be helpful.

APPENDIX B  
FAMILY SEPARATION WORKSHOP

I. Beginning Assumptions and Perceptions

- A. Separation of family members due to deployments and extended unaccompanied tours are stressful.
- B. Individual family members are subjected to different worries, fears and anxieties before, during and after these separations.
- C. Roles such as wives and children are subjected to cause somewhat similar stresses during these separations.

II. Publics To Be Served

- A. Service Member
- B. Spouse of Service Member
- C. Children of Service Member

III. Needs, Constraints and Theme

A. Needs

- 1. There is a need on the part of the serviceman and his family to be aware of the problems likely to arise as a result of a separation and prepare for these problems so as to be better able to cope with the separation.

B. Constraints

- 1. Ideally, service members and their families should attend the workshop as a group. This may not always be possible and in these cases it is hoped that at least the service member or his/her spouse will attend so that at least one adult member of the family has been exposed to the ideas and concepts presented in the workshop.

2. Time. Workshops would be held in the evenings. This would require facilities for child care of pre-school children since the families will be attending the workshops as a unit. A maximum of four evening sessions is envisioned. This would minimize the time the family would be required to spend in the structured workshop environment.
  3. The need to avoid a paternalistic approach to the workshop. It should be treated as a review for those who have been through separations before and as a refresher in common sense for the first timers. Lecturing should be avoided at all cost.
- C. Theme - 'Coping During Family Separations'. This general idea encompasses the situation prior to, during and after the separation. The problem areas associated with each phase of separation will be explained and methods of coping offered.

#### IV. Workshop Goal

The goal of this series of workshops is twofold:

- A. To make the serviceman and his family AWARE of the problems which are likely to be encountered by all concerned before, during and after the separation.
- B. To prepare the service member and his family to deal with these problems as they arise and thereby improve their ability to cope with stresses of separation.

#### V. Workshop Objectives: Upon completion of the workshop the participants will:

- A. Be aware of the various stresses and problems which are likely to occur before, during and after an extended

family separation and will be able to list at least the major ones from memory.

- B. Through improved communication skills, be more aware of the other family member's reaction to the separation, manifesting itself in a more open dialogue between family members regarding their true feelings about the separation and how it is effecting them personally.
- C. Be able to cope with the problems associated with separation by using the skills acquired in the workshop. These skills will be in the areas of improved communications, combating boredom and loneliness, proper family planning and minimizing role conflict during and after the separation.
- D. Be aware of the resources available to dependents during separation in case of emergency or needs of a personal nature should arise.

I. Welcome and Introduction

- A. Overview of the workshop as a whole package.
  - 1. Explain that there would be workshops before, during and after the family separation.
  - 2. Each phase of the separation would have its own particular workshop designed to meet the needs of the family members.

II. Explain the Agenda for Today's Program

- A. Brief introduction to the overall topic by way of series of overhead projections.
- B. Present an element from the pre-separation workshop.
- C. Present an element from the post-separation workshop.

III. Pre-Separation Element

- A. Each spouse fill out a sheet listing the strengths of his or her partner which the writer feels will enable their partner to better cope with the separation.
- B. A very short discussion of these lists will follow if time permits. This will be on a voluntary basis.
- C. Each spouse list their own fears and anxieties regarding the upcoming separation.
- D. If time permits there will be a short discussion of these points.

IV. Post Separation: Role Reversal

- A. Allow the group to view a short video tape of a family experiencing difficulty in reintegrating after a long separation.
- B. With this as a basis for the workshop, commence the role reversal/ conflict portion. Ask for volunteers to take part in the scenario.

C. If time permits, discuss.

V. Wrap-Up and Conclusion

### Objectives For The Workshop

1. Participants will gain an insight into the overall layout of the workshop as a continuing effort before, during and after the separation.
2. Participants will be exposed to all the salient points of the workshop via a visual presentation.
3. Participants will be made more aware of their partner's feelings towards the separation in terms of how they view their partner and what fears they both harbor regarding the departure.
4. Participants will be more aware of some of the dangers of role conflict associated with reintegration after separation. Specifically the role of financial manager.

## Role Reversal (One)

### Female

You are a 23 year old female married to a 25 year old LTJG. He has just returned from an eight month West Pac deployment and you are going through a period of readjusting to one another.

Until he deployed, your husband handled all of the family finances. He gave you a household allowance and if you needed more you had to go to him and ask. You really had no idea of how the rest of the family finances were disbursed and were really in the dark when it came to money matters.

During the deployment you took on the routine chores of banking and bill paying and became responsible for most of the family's finances. You enjoyed the job, did it well, and also planned on retaining it when your husband returned.

Upon his return, your husband tells you that he wishes to return to the old system of giving you an allowance while he resumes the responsibility for the books. You see this as unfair and resist.

It all comes to a head one evening when you are writing checks to pay the monthly bills and he comes in and confronts you, demanding that you give up your role of family financial manager.



## Role Reversal (One)

### Male

You are a 25 year old LTJG and have just returned from an eight month West-Pac deployment. Before you left, you handled all of the family finances on a regular basis and your wife had virtually nothing to do with controlling the family budget.

While you were gone, she has, of necessity, assumed responsibility for the routine, everyday financial affairs of the family such as bill paying and handling the checking and savings accounts.

Now that you have returned, you desire to take over the family financial responsibilities once again. Your wife resists and claims that she did a good job while you were gone and sees no reason why she should have to relinquish her position.

You view this as a threat to your control of the family purse strings and demand that she give up her role as part of the family financial control board. She still resists.

It all comes to a head one evening when you confront her while she is writing the checks to pay the monthly bills.

### Workshop Evaluation Sheet

1. Were you aware of the purpose of the workshop?
2. Were the objectives of the workshop understood by you?
3. In your opinion, were the aims of the workshop met?
4. If not, what could have been done to better meet the objectives of the workshop?
5. Were the presentation and use of media adequate, appropriate and effective?
6. If not, what suggestion do you have for improving the mechanics of the presentation?
7. In your opinion, could this workshop be given by someone unfamiliar with its content prior to being exposed to it for the first time?
8. What do you feel you learned, or how did you benefit from this workshop?
9. Do you feel that the workshop met the needs of the audience?
10. Do you feel that preparation for the workshop was adequate on the part of the workshop leader?
11. What, if any, recommendations would you have to improve any aspect of the workshop?

Cues For Slides. Keyed By Number.

1. Separation is a part of military life and whether the service member is on sea duty or going overseas on an unaccompanied tour, the stress and strain of the father/husband being absent is always with us.
2. Be ready for anything. Don't wait until the last minute to get ready for the big day.
3. Before he leaves, talk about the separation and how you plan to handle it. How you'll break it to the children, what needs to be done to get ready for the period of absence.
4. Don't get caught short at the last second with loose details. Start early to get ready for the separation.
5. Remember, such things as wills and power of attorney take some time to prepare. Do it early.
6. Be sure to have the car all prepared for the period of absence. Don't leave the family with a clunker.
7. If your spouse needs to be briefed on how to keep the family books in the absence of the husband, do it early so there is no mystery when the day comes that she must do it on her own.
8. Learn the procedures for using the Red Cross. This will save lots of time, money and frustration on everyone's part.
9. If you need it, the time to learn about Champus is before he goes, not while you're standing in the emergency room.
10. Learn about the formal resources designed to serve you during this period before you need them.

11. Be aware that you will feel some emotional trauma when he leaves and while he is gone. This is normal, there's nothing wrong with you.
12. Almost everyone in this situation goes through some sort of rough adjustment period. Use the resources available to you.
13. These are some of the emotions you may feel upon hearing the news that your spouse is going on an extended trip. Again, it's normal, don't try to hide the way you feel, talk about it.
14. There are things which you can do during the period of separation which will help you to get through it all.
15. Don't keep things to yourself. Your mate wants to know how you're feeling. Share your feelings.
16. Mail call is good medicine for both parties. Write as often as you can. Decide how often you'll write and do you're best to stick to the schedule.
17. Pictures are a great morale booster for everyone. Dad should send pictures of where he's been and Mom should send pictures of the kids and herself. This is a big plus.
18. Tapes are now inexpensive and allow both sides of the family to hear the other's voice now and then. Another big boost to the morale of the family.
19. Through the reading of letters and listening to tapes and showing lots of pictures, try to keep father psychologically present in the home and in the minds of the children.
20. If there is something that you know the other spouse can do nothing about long distance don't say something that will only serve to worry the other. You must decide.

21. Don't argue over the miles. It does no good and can only make a tough situation worse.
22. Reinforce this very simple and basic emotion. It really does a lot of good for everyone.
23. This can be a deadly combination. Stay active and don't let yourself become lonely and bored.
24. Post separation may be the hardest time of all. The reintegration and readjustment period is potentially hazardous. Be aware that everyone has changed and that it may take some time for people to get used to one another again.
25. While the husband has gone, the wife handled all of these roles. Now that the husband is home again they will probably have to be renegotiated. Take it slow and be understanding and patient with one another.

DAY/TIME	EVENT	RELATED OBJECTIVE	OUTCOMES	WHO
CNE/1100	OVERVIEW OF WORKSHOP	ALL	PARTICIPANTS WILL HAVE INFORMATION ABOUT UPCOMING EVENTS	WORKSHOP LEADER

TIME ALLOCATED FOR ELEMENT- 10 MIN; EXPECTED RUNNING TIME-5MIN.

STAFF ACTIVITY	PARTICIPANT ACTIVITY	NOTES
WORKSHOP LEADER PRESENT OVERVIEW OF ENTIRE WORKSHOP CONCEPT	LISTEN, ASK QUESTIONS	-
WORKSHOP LEADER GIVE SHORT BRIEF ON TODAY'S ACTIVITIES	LISTEN, ASK QUESTIONS	- THIS WILL COVER 27 MAY WORKSHOP

DAY/TIME	EVENT	RELATED OBJECTIVES	OUTCOMES	WHO
ONE/1315	PRESENTATION	ALL	PARTICIPANTS WILL BE EXPOSED TO ALL SALIENT POINTS OF THE WORKSHOP IN TOTO	WORKSHOP LEADER

TIME ALLOCATED FOR ELEMENT: 15 MIN EXPECTED RUNNING TONE: 10 MIN.

STAFF ACTIVITY	PARTICIPANT ACTIVITY	NOTES
PRESENT OVERHEAD PROJECTIONS AND GIVE SHORT BLURB ON EACH	LISTEN, ASK QUESTIONS	

DAY/TIME	EVENT	RELATED OBJECTIVES	OUTCOMES	WHO
ONE/1330	PRE-DEPLOYMENT EXERCISE: SELF-ESTEEM/AWARENESS	ALL	PARTICIPANTS WILL BE MORE AWARE OF PARTNERS FEELINGS RE: SEPARATION	PARTICIPANTS LEADER

TIME ALLOCATED FOR ELEMENT: 20 MIN. EXPECTED RUNNING TIME: 15 MIN.

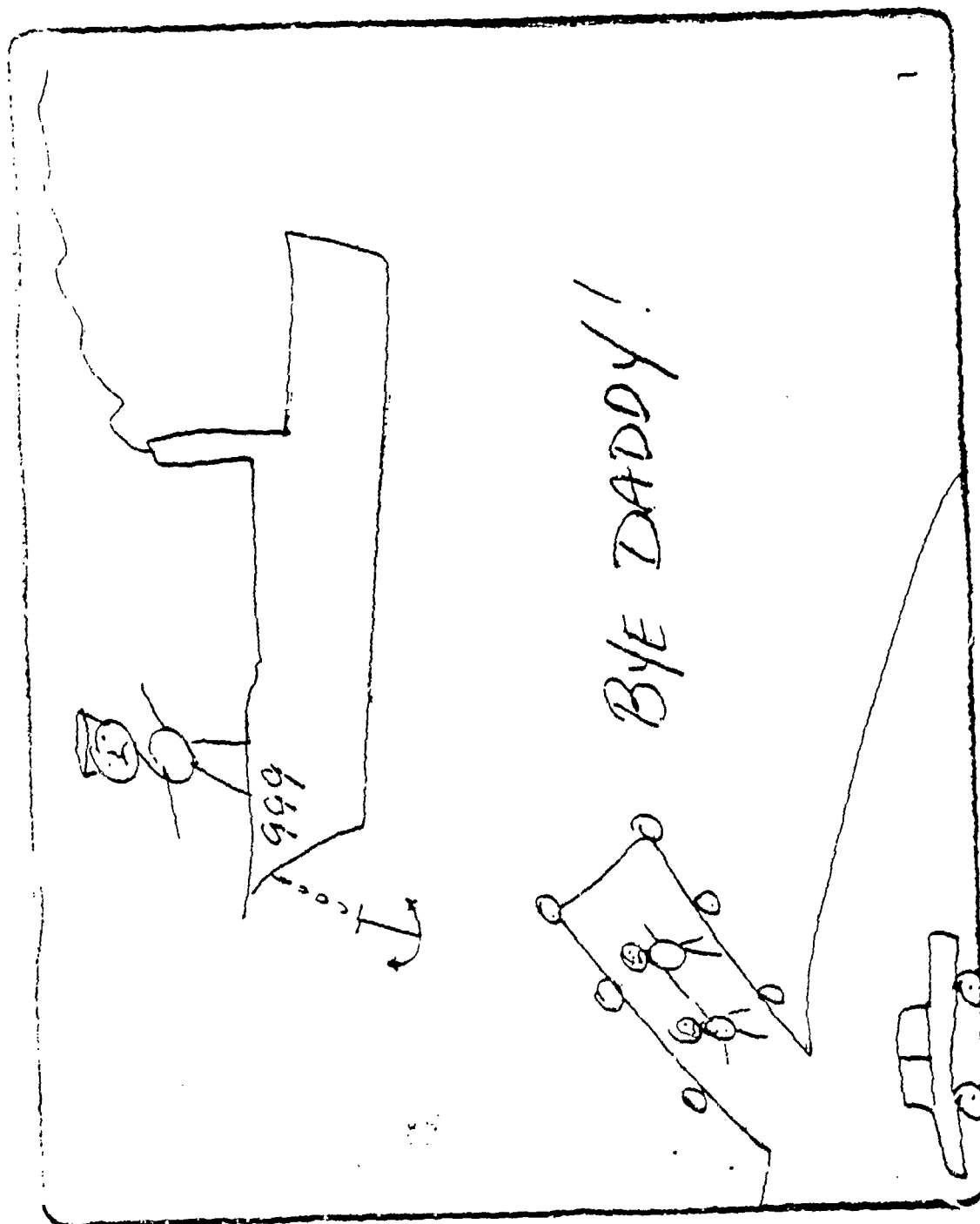
STAFF ACTIVITY	PARTICIPANT ACTIVITY	NOTES
PRESENT ELEMENT TO PARTICIPANTS	<p>PARTICIPANTS:</p> <p>(1). LIST STRENGTHS OF THEIR SPOUSE THAT THEY FEEL WILL HELP THEM GET THROUGH THE SEPARATION BETTER.</p> <p>(2). LIST THREE OF THEIR OWN FEARS ABOUT THE UPCOMING SEPARATION.</p> <p>(3). DISCUSS LISTS WITH PARTNER</p>	<p>FOR PURPOSES OF THIS WORKSHOP, THE ACTIVITY WILL BE LIMITED TO LISTING ONLY. DISCUSSION CAN BE HELD AFTERWARDS.</p>

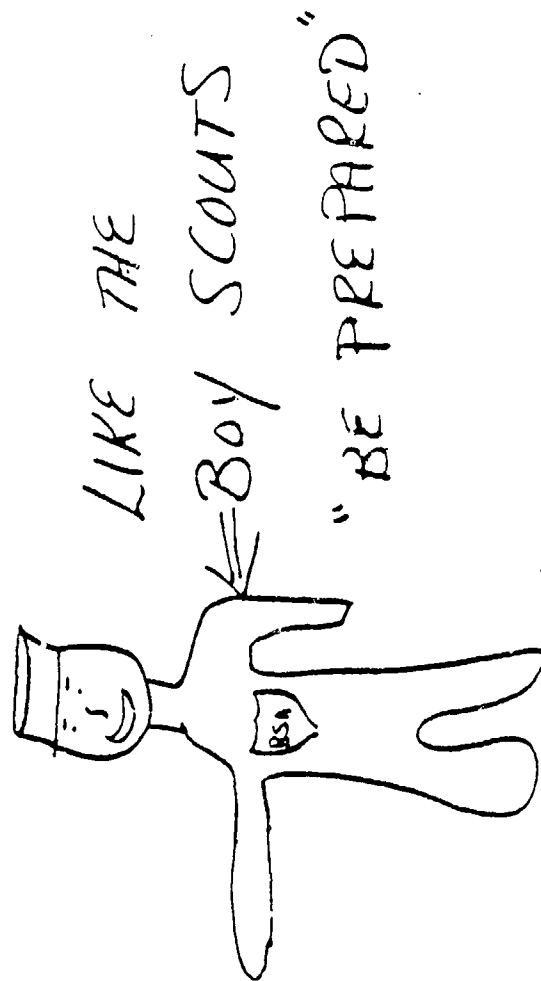


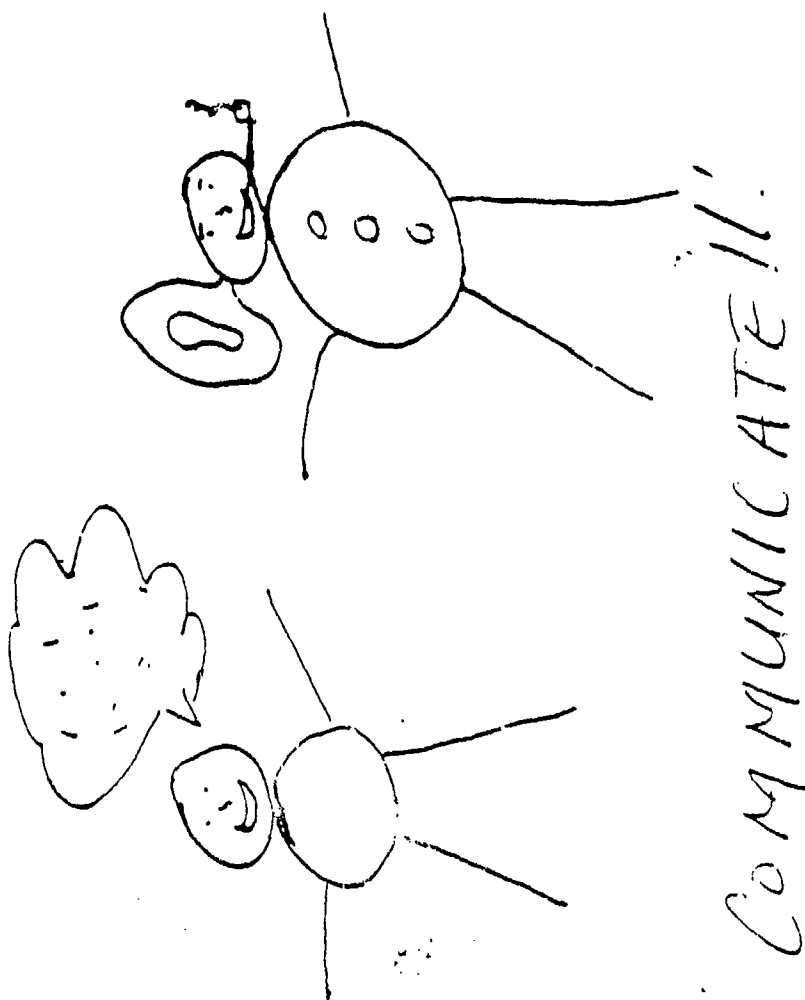
DAY/TIME	EVENT	RELATED OBJECTIVES	OUTCOMES	WHO
ONE/1350	POST DEPLOYMENT EXERCISE: ROLE REVERSAL	ALL	PARTICIPANTS WILL BE MORE AWARE OF SOME OF THE DANGERS OF ROLE CONFLICT ASSOCIATED WITH REINTEGRATION AFTER SEPARATION.	LEADER/ PARTICIPANTS

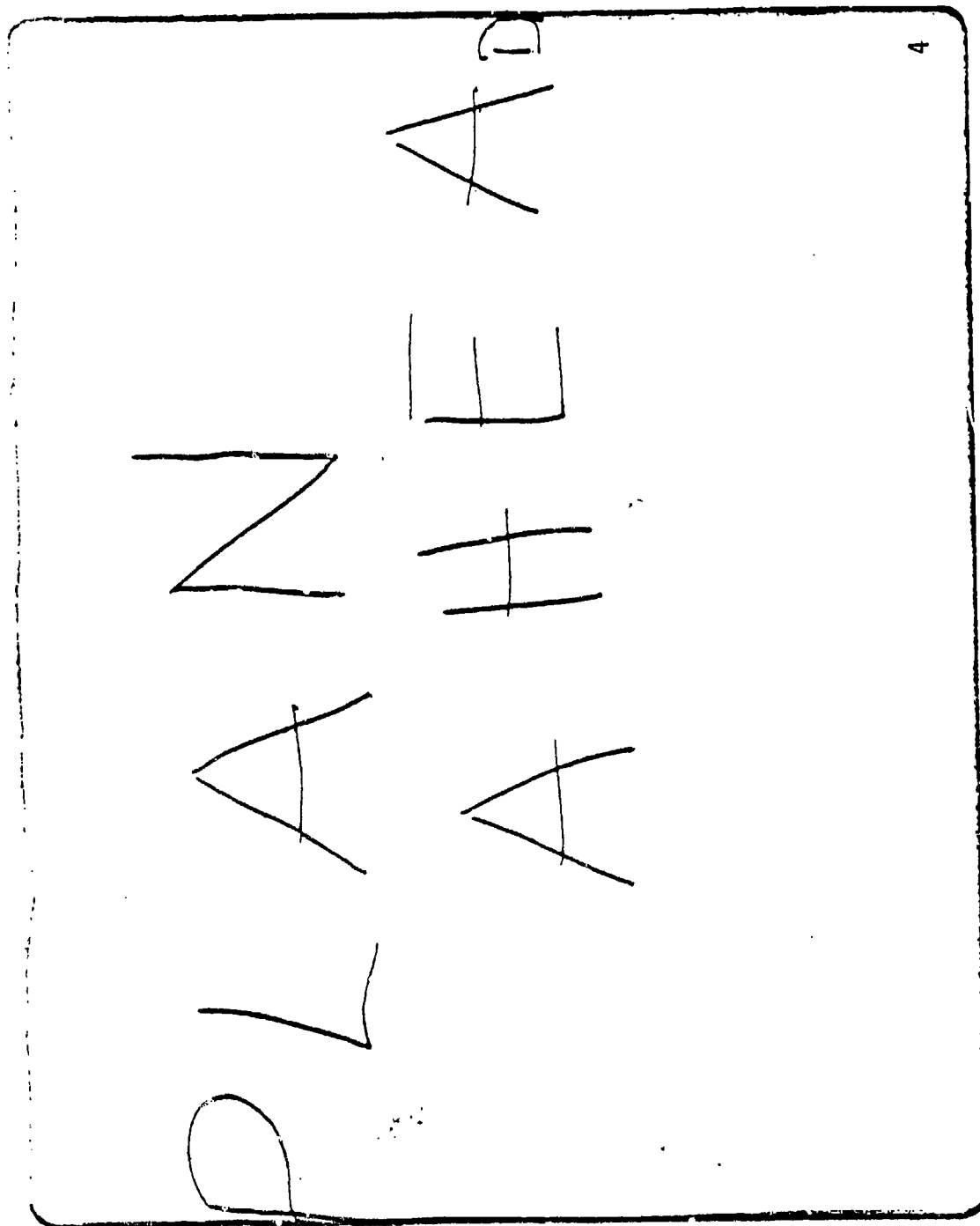
TIME ALLOCATED FOR ELEMENT: 20 MIN. EXPECTED RUNNING TIME: 15 MIN.

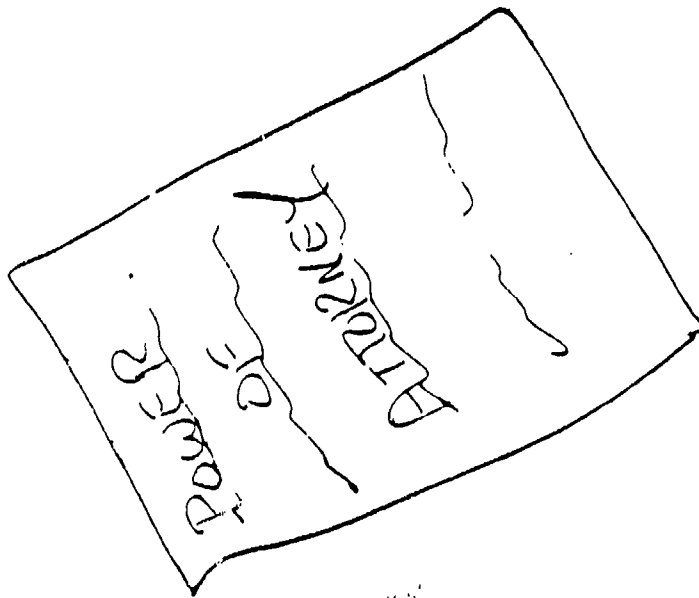
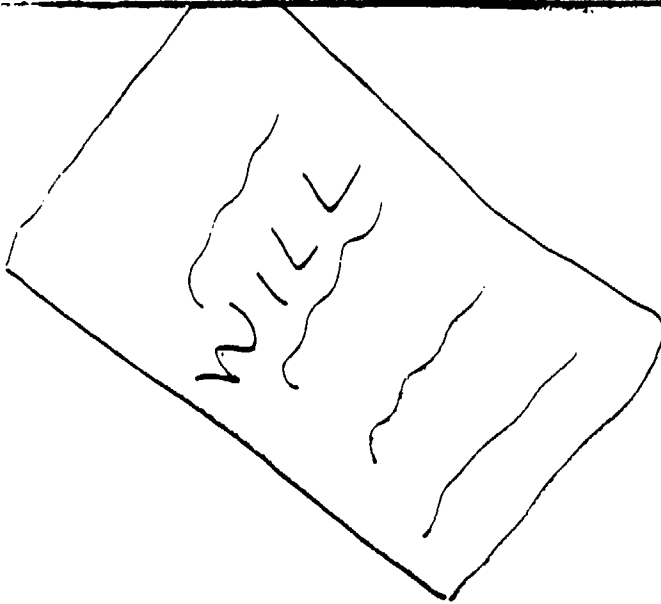
STAFF ACTIVITY	PARTICIPANT ACTIVITY	NOTES
SHOW VIDEO TAPE OF FAMILY REINTEGRATION SCENE.	OBSERVE	RUNNING TIME OF 5 MIN.
SET STAGE FOR ROLE REVERSAL: SELECT COUPLE FOR FINANCIAL SCENE.	READ ROLE CARDS AND PORTRAY OPPOSITE SEX'S ROLE IN THE DRAMA.	THIS IS VOLUNTARY
DISCUSS ROLE REVERSAL	DISCUSS ROLE REVERSAL	IF TIME PERMITS





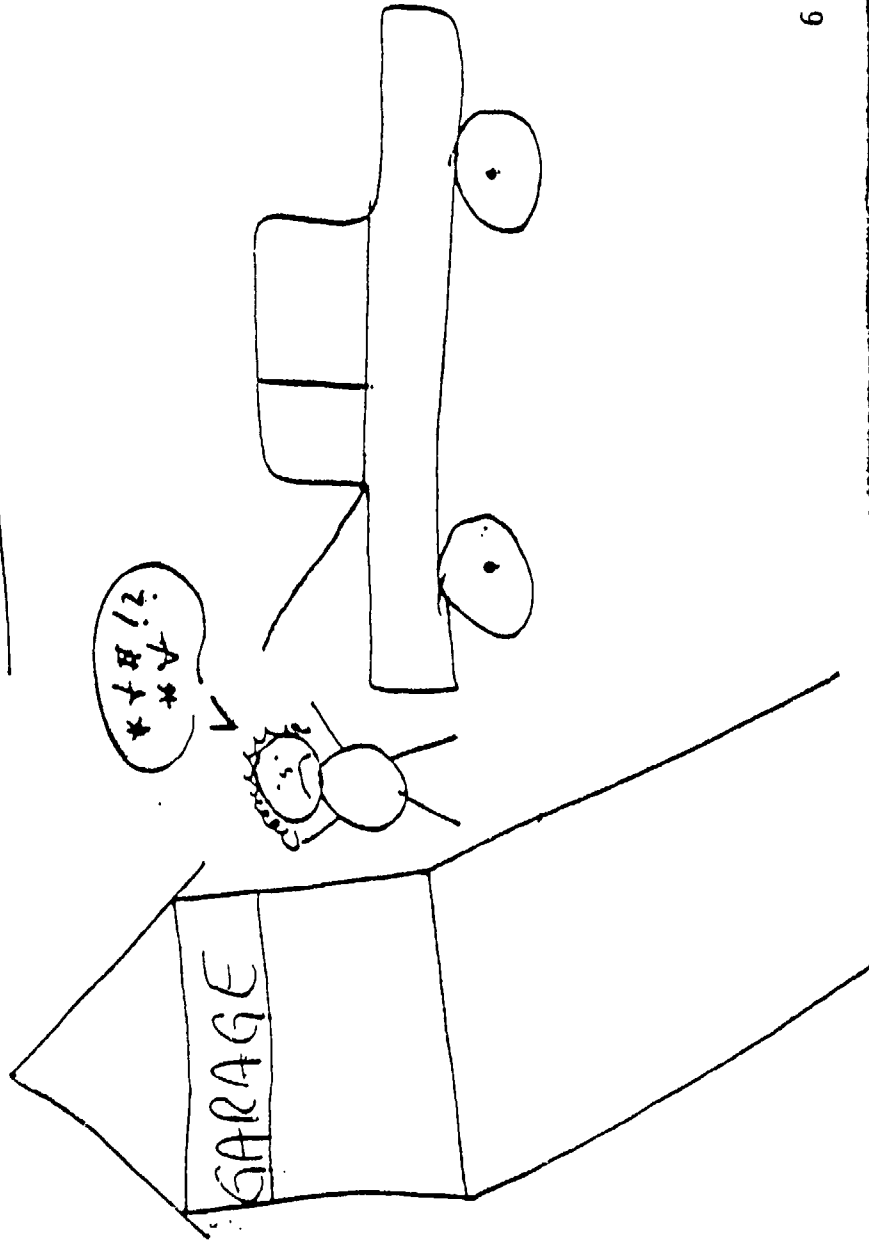




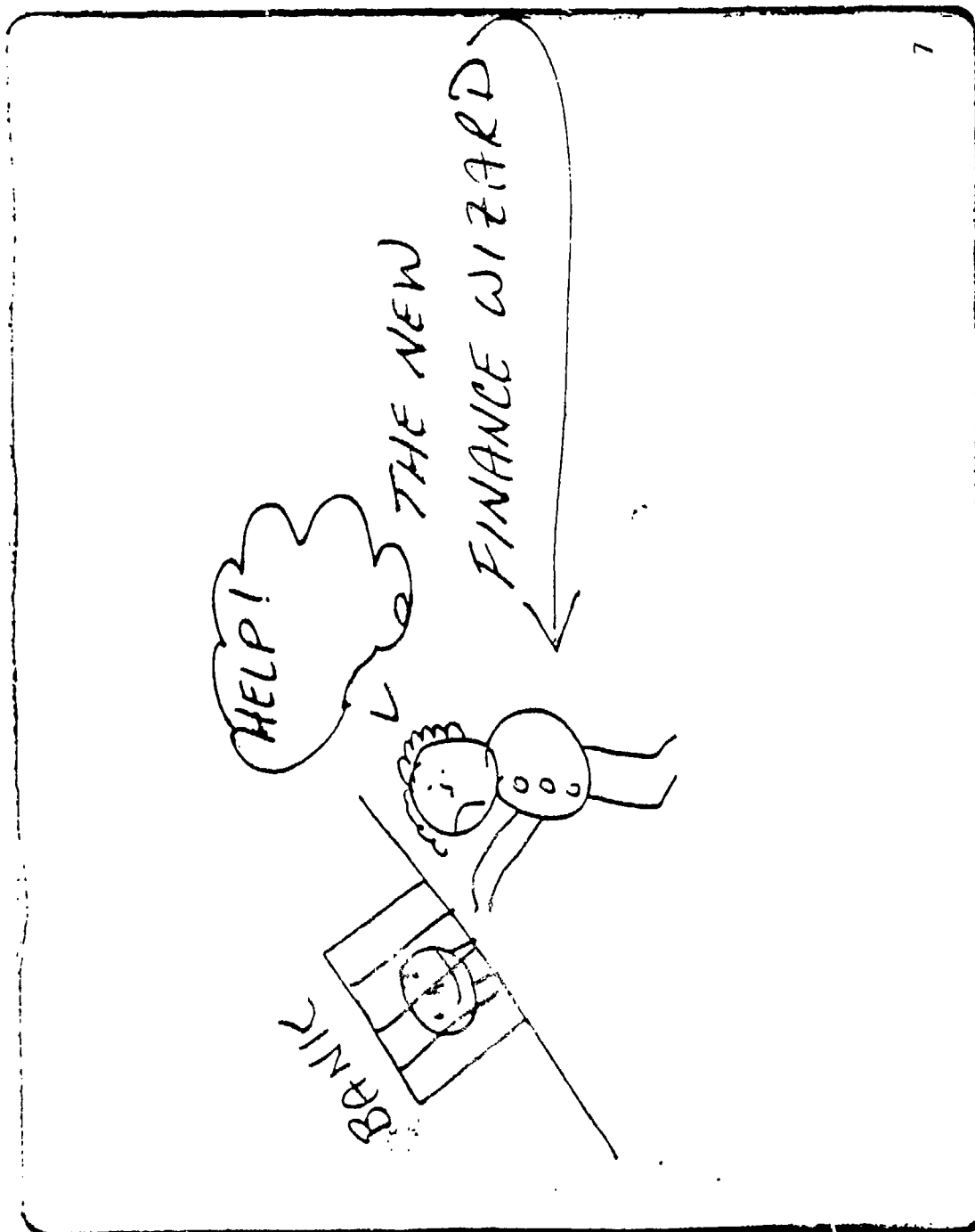


GET THINGS IN ORDER  
BEFORE YOU GO!

TAGS/ MAINTENANCE  
INSURANCE ETC.

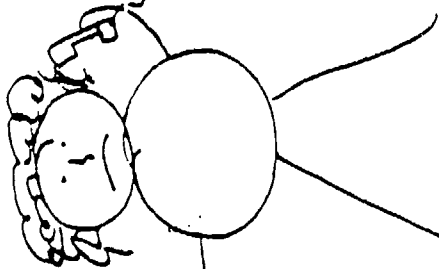
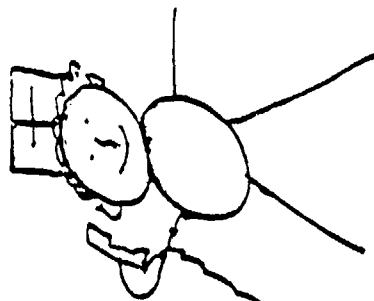


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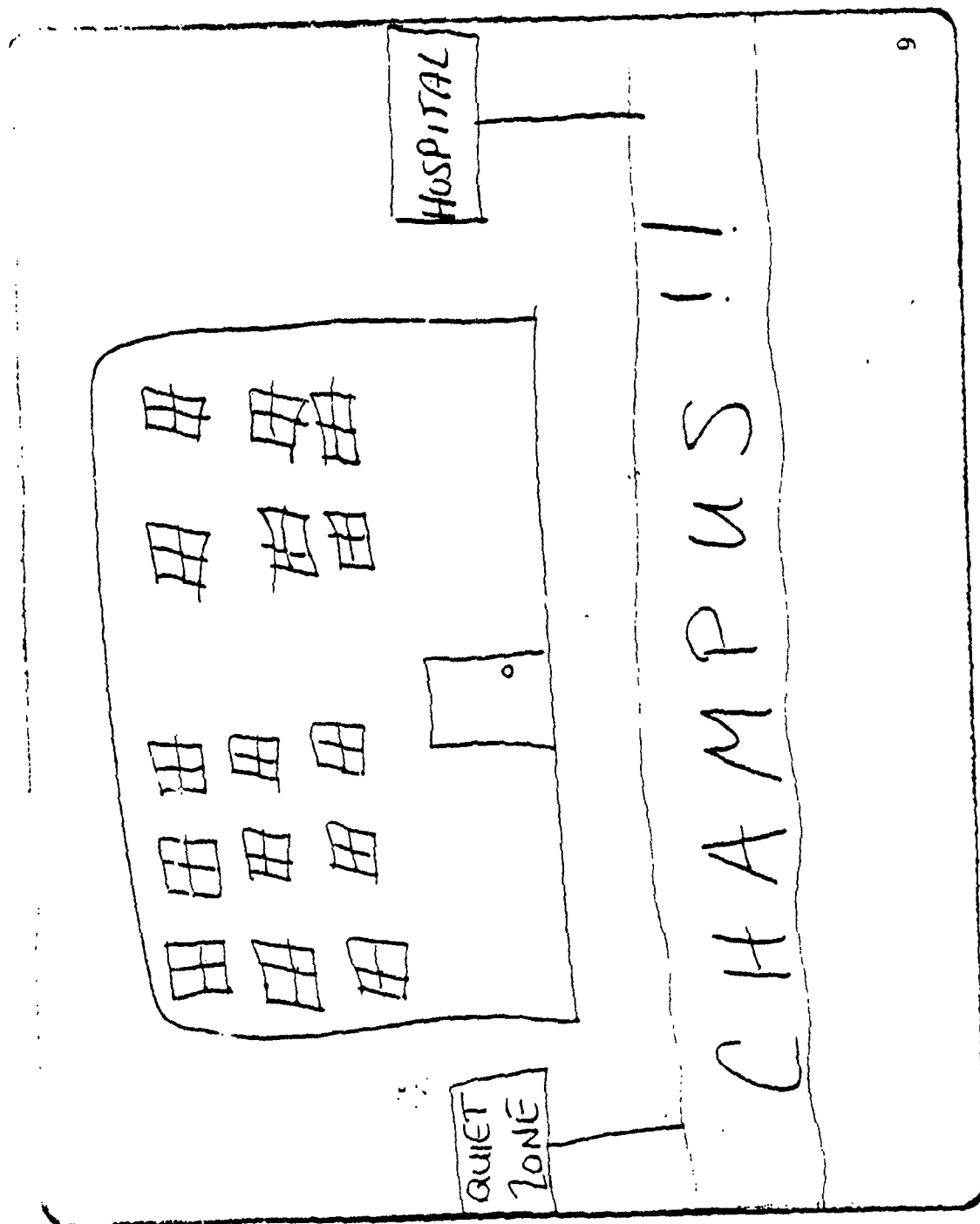




RED CROSS



KNOW HOW TO REACH HIM  
IN AN EMERGENCY!!!



OMBUDSMAN

BASE  
AR  
CHAPLAIN C

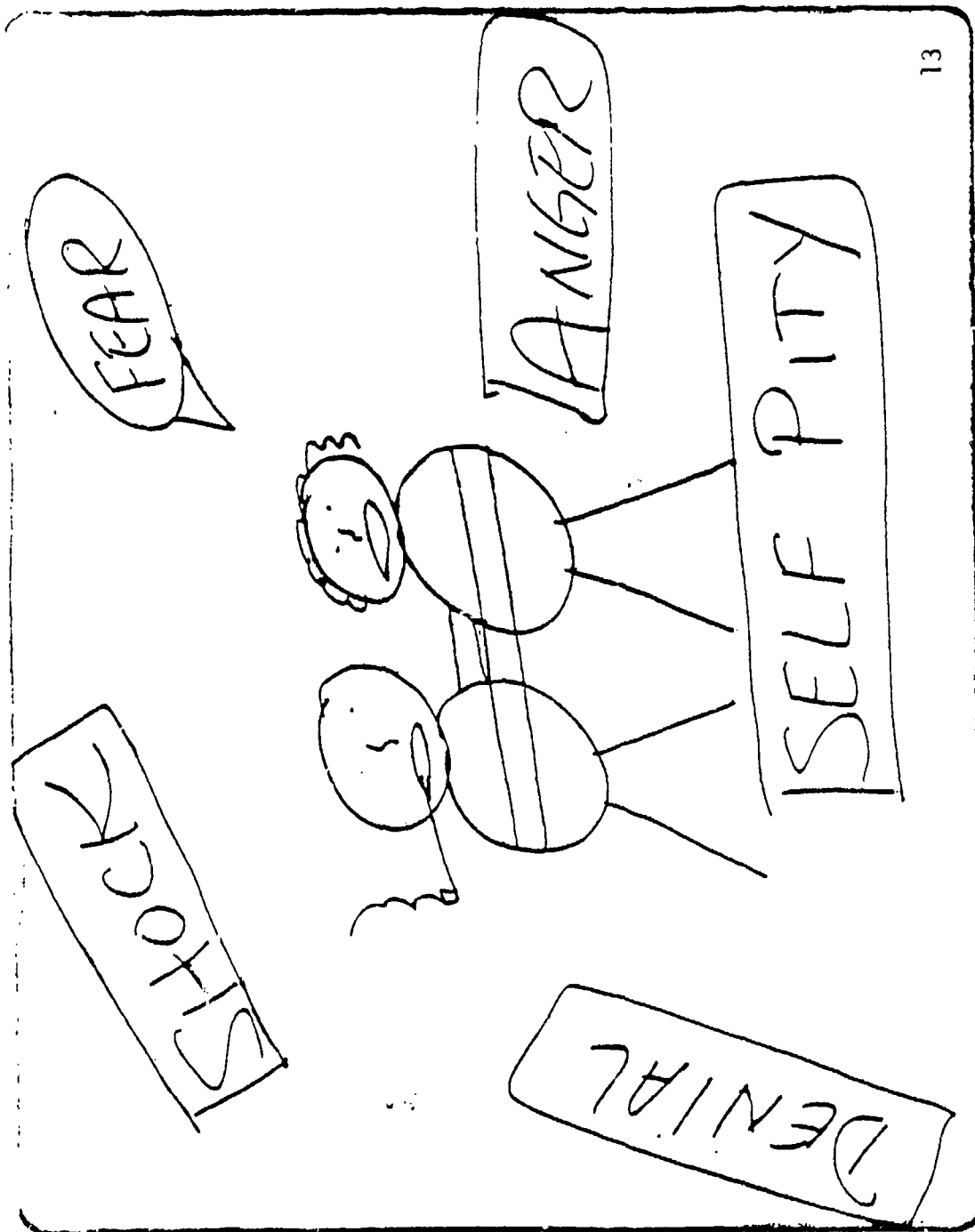
FAMILY RESOURCES



GETTING READY ON THE  
EMOTIONAL FRONT

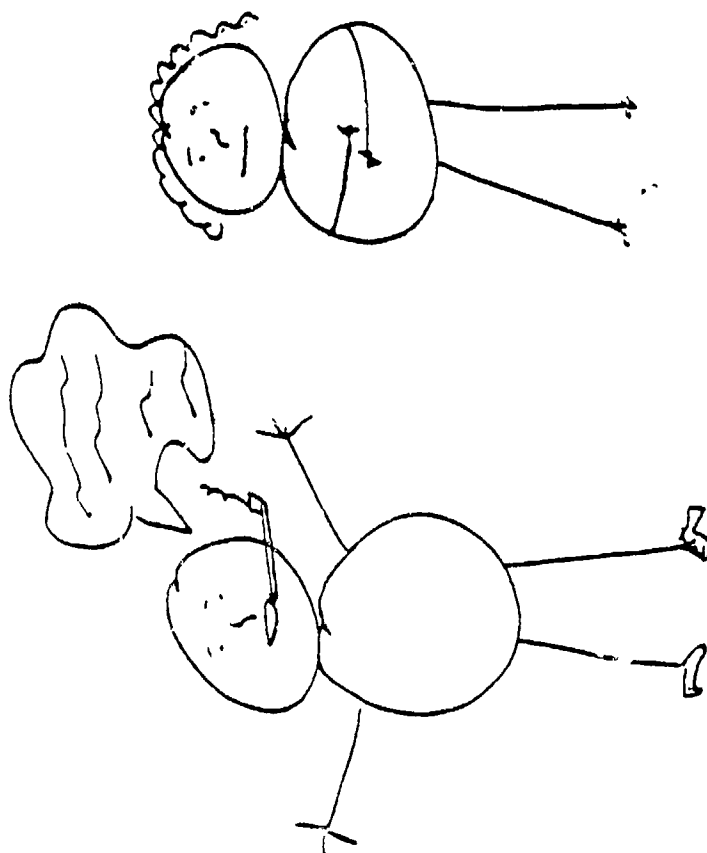
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YOU'RE  
NOT  
ALONE



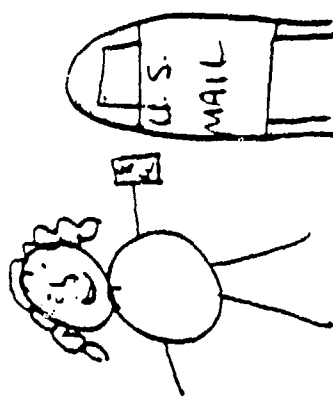
DURING

SEPARATION

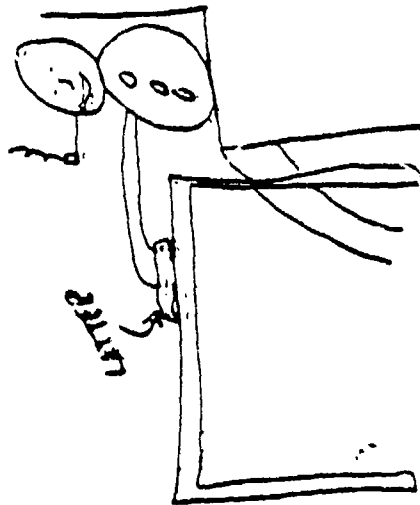


SHARE YOUR FEELINGS

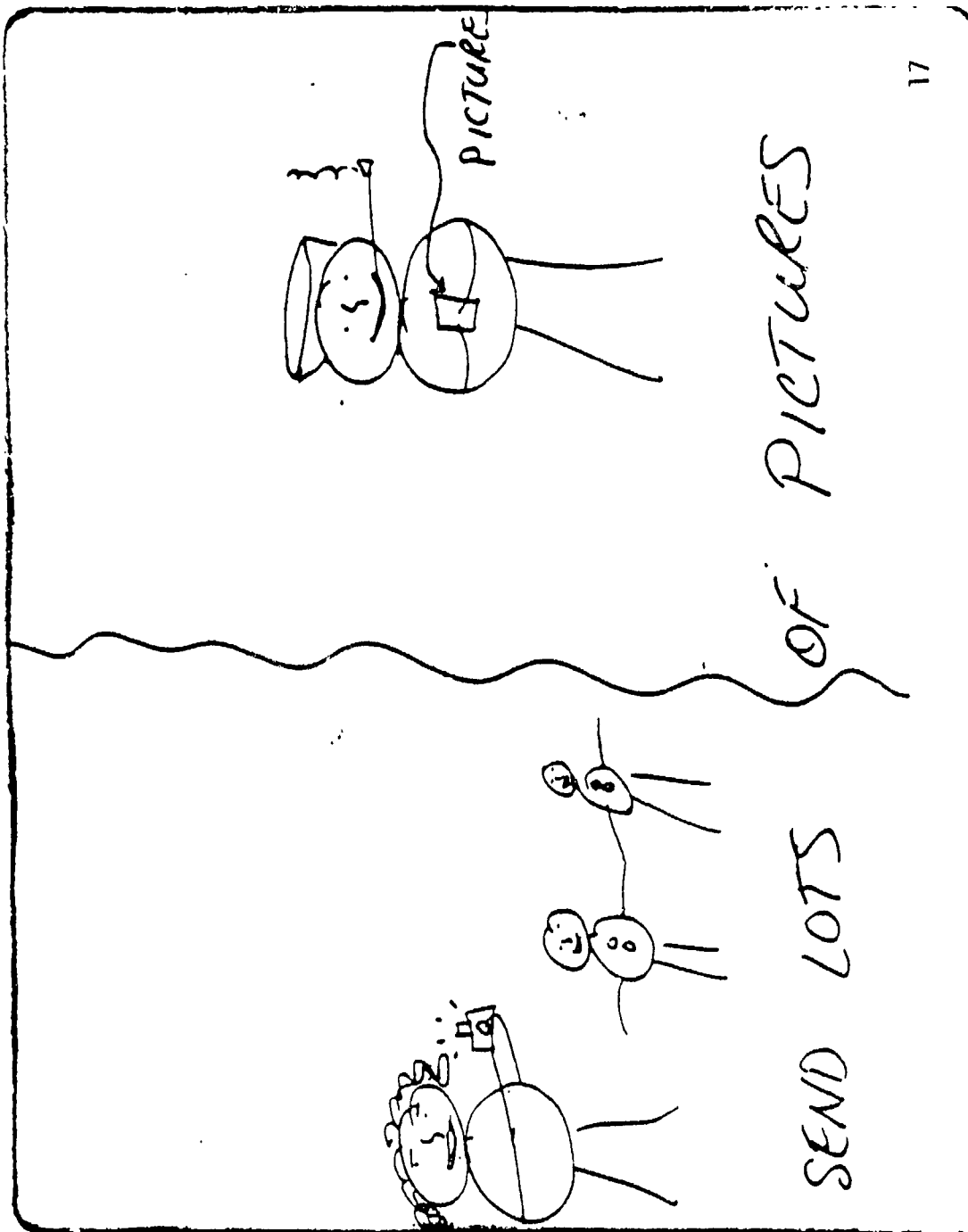


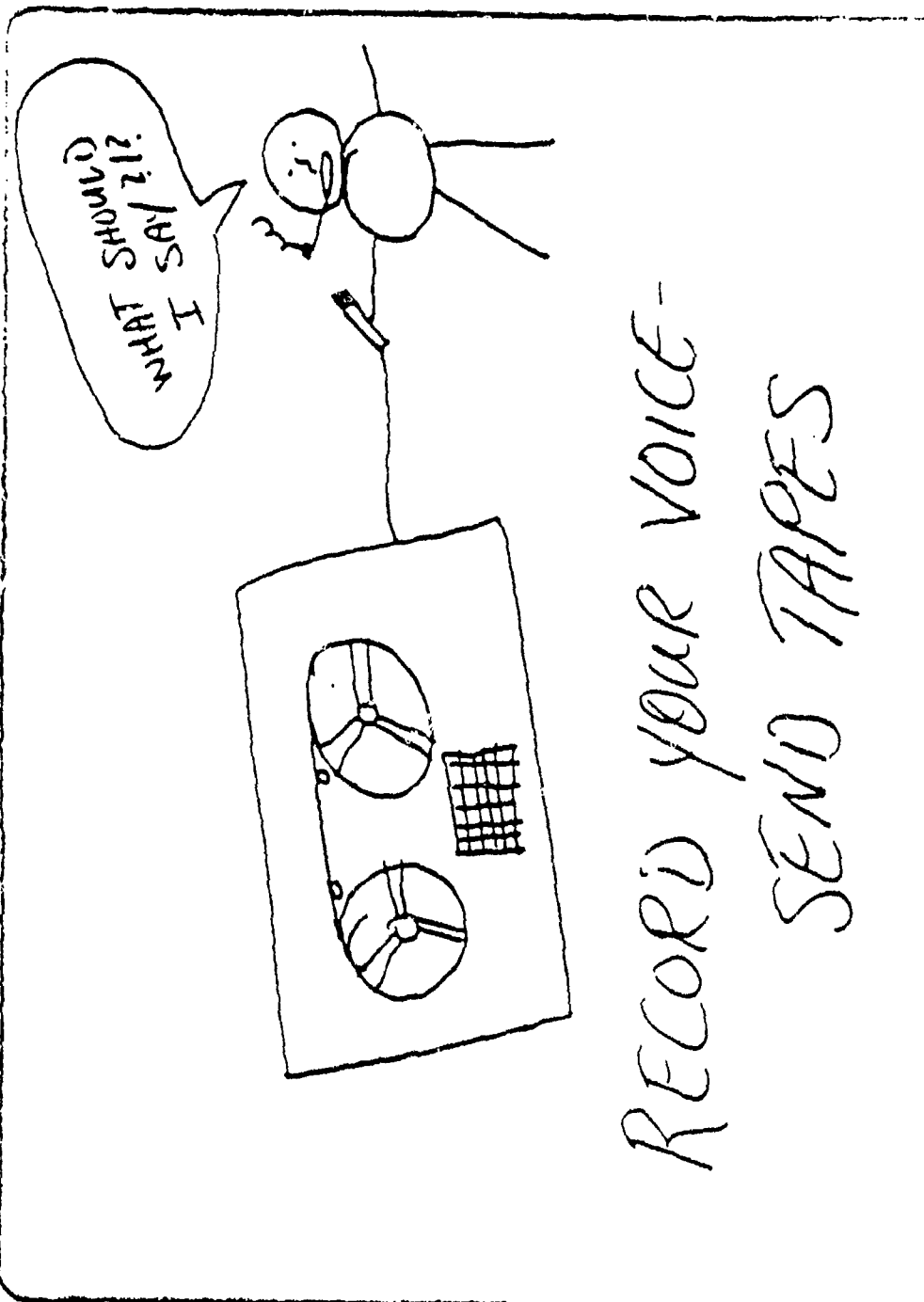


WRITE



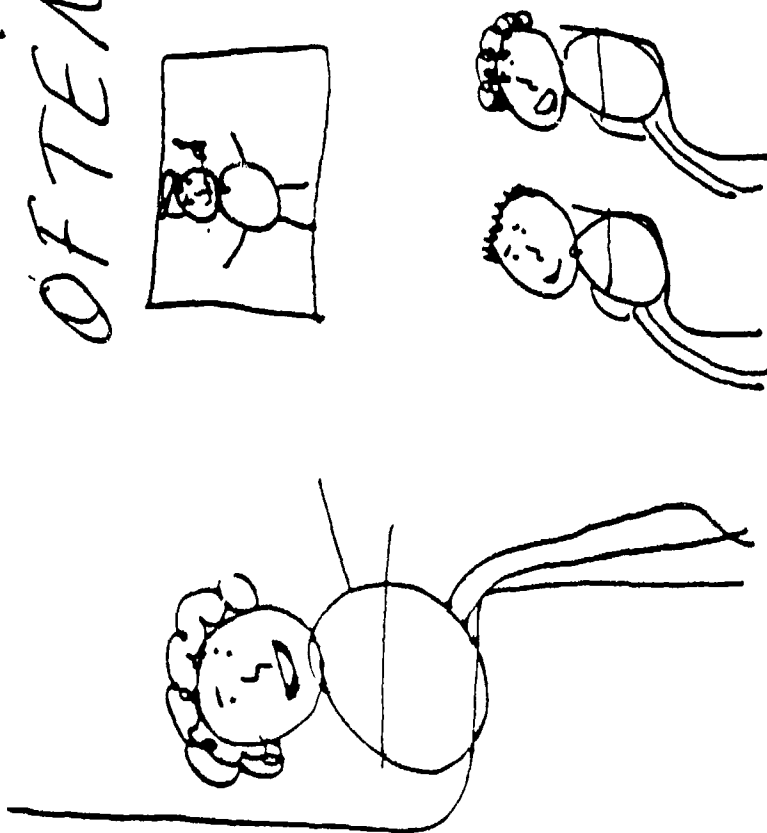
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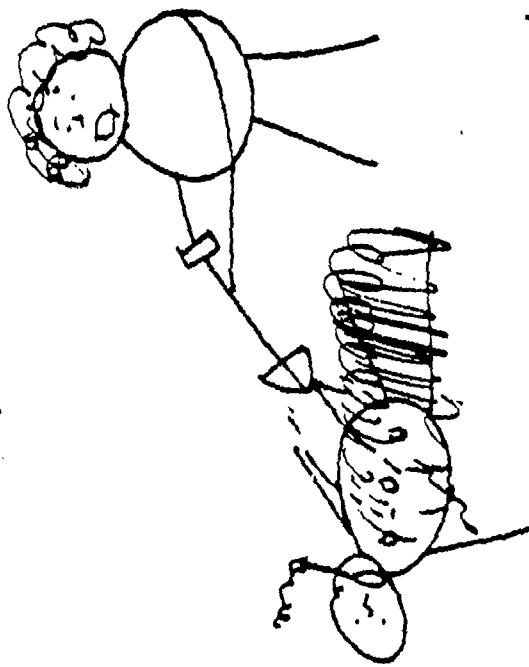


RECORD YOUR VOICE-  
SEND TAPES

TALK ABOUT DAD  
OFTEN







DON'T BURY HIM  
WITH YOUR PROBLEMS

IT LLOV

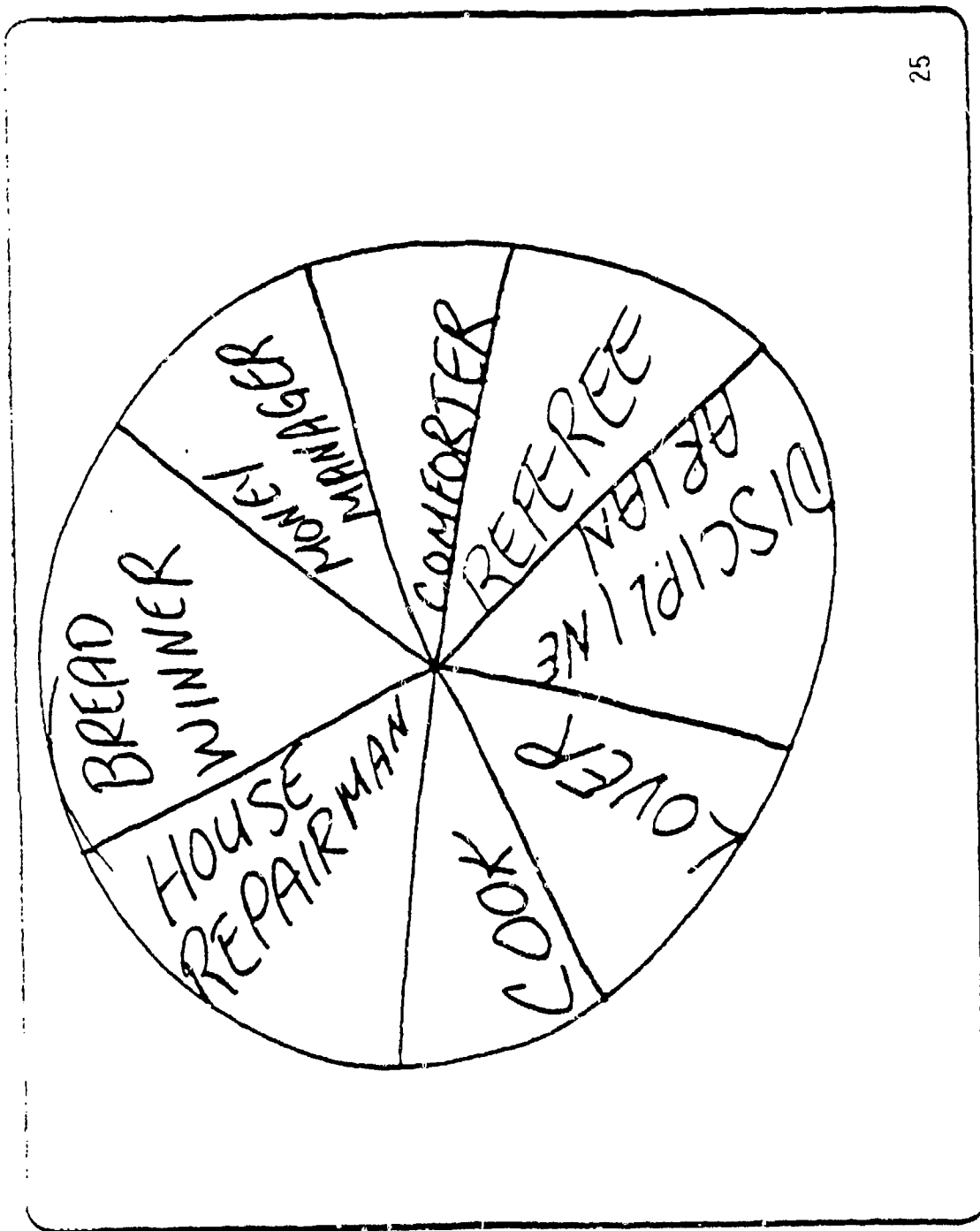
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SAY IT OFTEN

CONVULSIONS  
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